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A grain of wheat



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A Grain of
Wheat and
Other Sermons

Walter Benwell Hinson



PROPERTY
OF
THE WESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PORTLAND, OREGON

BOOK No.

PASTOR
The East Side Baptist
Church
Portland, Oregon

AUTHOR
"Sunrise at Midnight"
"Jesus the Carpenter"
etc.



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God the Consuming Fire

DR. HINSON is a man of the people—rugged, simple, experienced in the sufferings and trials of life. He is also a man of God—a man whom Christ has raised up and to whom He has revealed, through the Word, the meaning of the experiences of life. Thus he has become, unto the Church, a gift of God, for comfort in days of adversity, and for exhortation unto steadfastness in the faith; and, unto the people, a prophet, to warn of the judgment impending, and to point out the One Way open unto salvation.

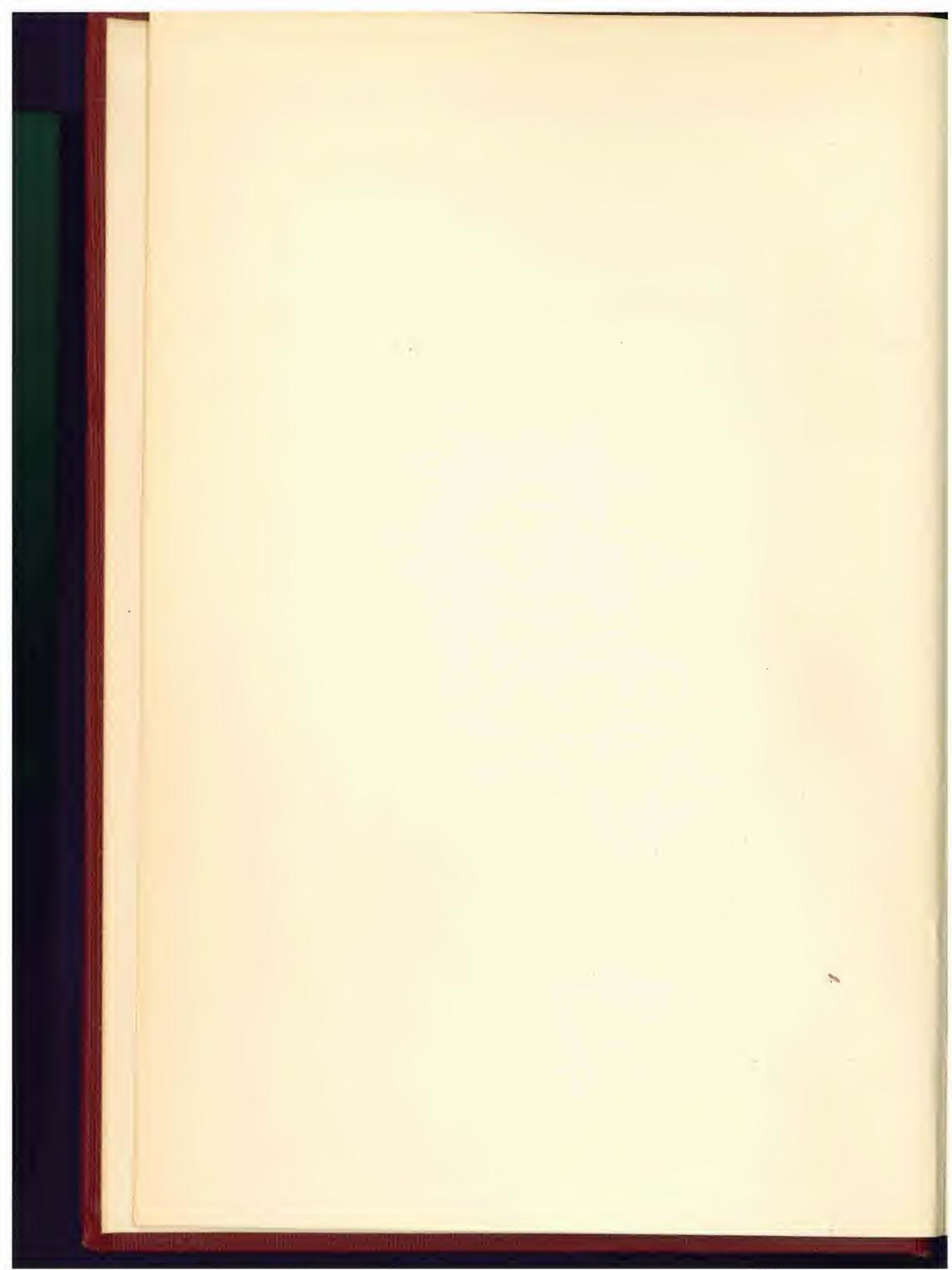
The stamp of genuineness is upon his utterances. These are not the words of a sermon-maker, but words of life from a preacher, hot burning, as only the words of a man can be who speaks in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

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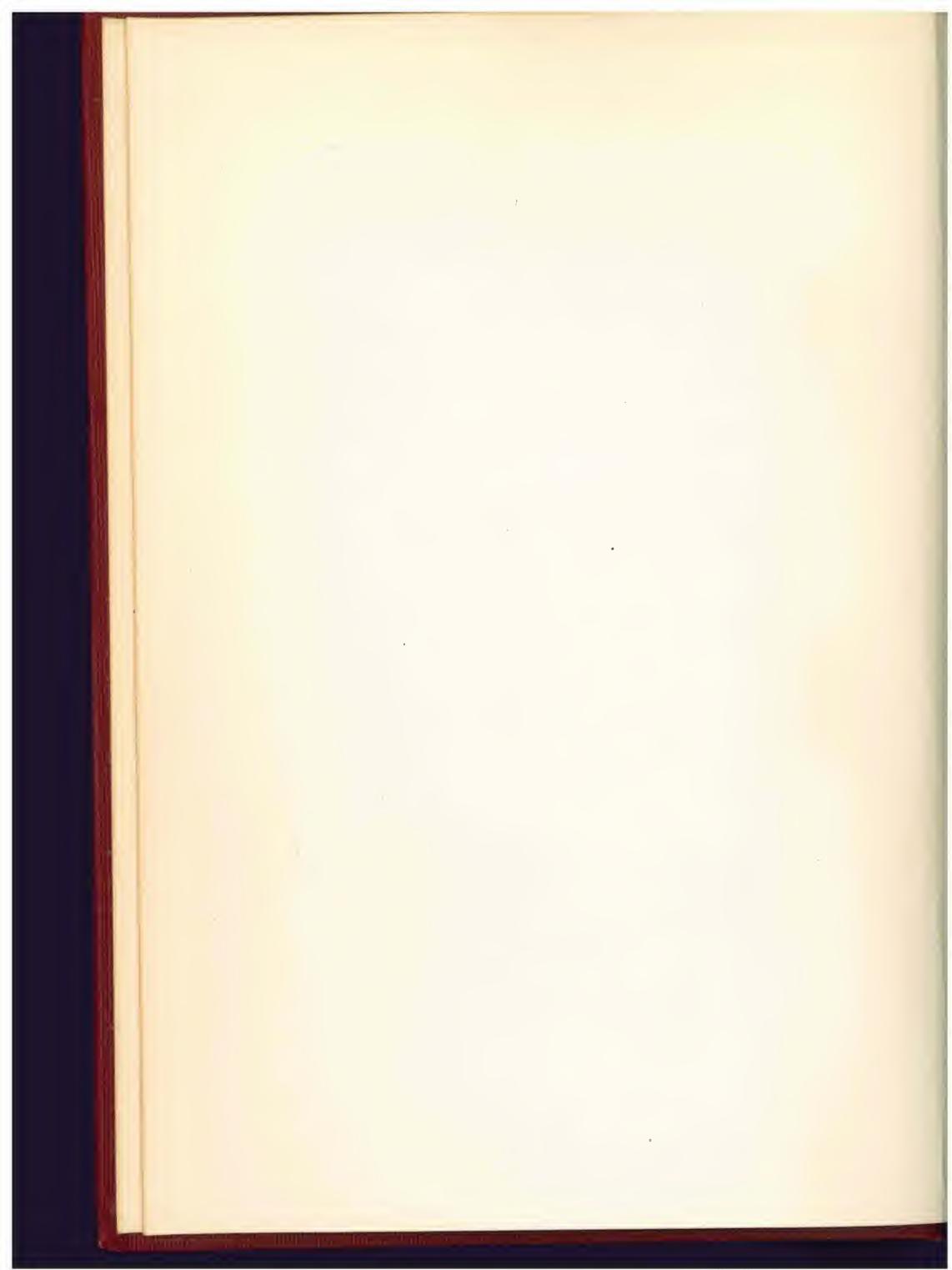
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A. B. Hinson



A GRAIN OF WHEAT AND
OTHER SERMONS



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A GRAIN OF WHEAT

and Other Sermons

By

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Jesus the Carpenter, *Sunrise at Midnight*, *The Real
Lord's Prayer*, *The Return of the Lord*, etc.



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4/25/52



A GRAIN OF WHEAT

and Other Sermons

I

A GRAIN OF WHEAT

“Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”
—John 12:24.

THE setting of that text is picturesque and deeply suggestive. Some Greeks came where Jesus was talking, and singling out one of his disciples, Philip by name, expressed their desire to have an interview with Christ. Who they were, nobody knows, nor where they came from. Possibly some fugitive notes of the great melody of our Lord's ministry had floated over into their ears and they wanted to hear the full song of which they had caught the faint echo. That they should go to Philip was perfectly natural, because he had the Greek name and they would therefore be naturally attracted to him. And Philip, having heard their request, calls into counsel Andrew—another man with a Greek name—and the two consult about this desire of those visiting Greeks.

I must pause a moment to say it is very congratulatory to Philip that the Greeks should ask him for an introduction to Jesus. And I caught myself wondering how many Philips we have in this church. Has anybody ever asked *you* for an introduction to Jesus? Are *you* known in the

city of Portland as a man who can introduce people to Christ?

It is no marvel to me that Philip took counsel with Andrew, for Andrew was a noted man at introducing folk to Jesus. Why, the outstanding preacher of Pentecost was introduced to Jesus by Andrew, and in the day when the awards are given, great gain will flow towards Andrew for his marvelous achievement in bringing Simon Peter to Christ.

Now how they introduced those people to the Lord the record does not tell, nor what He said to them, nor the result of their interview; but rather strangely there falls upon the ear a congratulation uttered by Jesus that appears out of all proportion to the scene, for Jesus said, "This is the harvest." Only a few Greeks—the harvest! And he rejoiced to think that already—or ever his death had been accomplished at Calvary—the Gentile world was breaking in through all the restraining barriers of Judaism and seeking an interest in the great kingdom of God. But was it out of proportion after all?

Is he an unwise enthusiast who prophesies the day from the first eastern streaks of the dawn? Is he a foolish optimist who proclaims the coming song by the first faint notes of the melody? Is he lacking in judgment who picks the first flowers of the spring-time and says, "Thank God, the summer is coming?" Perhaps He was eminently wise as He looked at that stray half-dozen men, and said, "They herald the great multitude, innumerable as the stars in the sky, who shall follow in their trail and walk the path they have blazed out." And who knows but His eye went down the coming centuries until He saw in the procession, headed by those Greeks, the people whom I baptized this morning?

Yes, He saw the harvest; but He saw the seed-sowing that must precede the harvest. He saw the distant coronation; but He knew coronation depended upon crucifixion. He saw the crown of eternal glory; but He knew the price of the crown was the cross. He heard the triumphant song of the glorified; but He knew first He had to hear the hoarse shout, "To the cross! to the cross with Him!" And then He turned and said, in His own matchless way, "Except a grain of wheat—this grain of wheat—fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

But if a grain of wheat—even Himself—shall die, it bringeth forth a bounteous, boundless, eternal harvest. And so He said that life after all is as a grain of wheat, which may be rightly or wrongly disposed of. It may be used up and consumed in selfishness and remain alone, with no harvest attached to it. Or it may be used unselfishly and grandly and bring forth a harvest unto the good of man and the glory of God. And I want to put before you the two-fold suggestion of my Lord's word.

You may live a useless life. There is a grain of wheat in the hand of a marooned sailor on an island in the South sea. He has only one grain, and he looks at it. There it lies in the palm of his hand, smooth and hard and shining, yet possessed of a marvelous productiveness under right conditions. And now this marooned man there all alone, may hark back through the years and remember the bread his mother made and how good it tasted, until his mouth waters and his tongue longs to taste the sweetness of that grain of wheat once more, even though he never tastes it again. But I should like to halt him for a moment and say, "That wheat grain contains potentiality of a yellow golden harvest that will feed you for life, if you will only make right use of it." And when he disregards my

counsel and crunches the one little grain of wheat between his teeth, and smacks his lips over the sweetness of it as he consumes it, ah, my heart aches, for now he will never more taste wheat, never more have flour, never more have luscious bread. He has used up his one grain of wheat on which all his harvest depended. And I feel that way sometimes as I look at the life of man, at your life, at mine, I say that is how I feel. And this makes the pain of preaching; the unspeakable pain of it; the nerve-racking, heart-breaking pain of it.

"Oft when the Word is on me to deliver,
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare.
Desert or throng, the city or the river
Melts in a lucid paradise of air,—
Only like souls I see the folk thereunder
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented with a show of things.
Then, with a rush, the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call;
Oh, to save such, to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

I say that is the pain of preaching, that a man may get a message from God and bring it with all the passion of his soul and proclaim it with a pathos that strains his very heartstrings, and then some fool makes a remark to another fool about a new hat some woman wears in the church. And this is the pain of living, to see people living the wasted, useless life. Why, you young people, sometimes you almost drive me mad as I think of the great books you might read that would make you heroic in soul, that would fortify you for the great struggle of life, that would put nerve in you, invigorate and help you to stand four-square to all the world, and yet you will not read them. But you find your mental nourishment in magazines bes-

tially illustrated and damnably suggestive; and you sedulously gather the mica that is worthless while you neglect the gold that is of such high value.

And not only do the young cause pain to the man who looks with eyes that see, but the older folk also. What is your chief ambition in life, my brother? To build up a business? To accumulate a few thousands of dollars? To get a larger house? To have a little bit of notice in the newspaper, when you might so live as to some day hear Jesus Christ say, "Well done"? And you might so live as to enter into heaven at the last like a conqueror, welcomed by the eternal God.

Oh, I often wonder whether I am more pained at the indifference of the unconverted, or by the indifference of the unconsecrated; and I think the hurt that hurts steadily is the indifference of the people who will not be consecrated by God. To think of what you men and women could do, if you liked. Oh, if you would just put brawn and brain and heart and money and time and talent and soul into the work of this church, you could make the church shine gloriously as the full moon, and be terrible to unrighteousness as a bannered army. You could make it as the mouthpiece of God. But God have mercy on your intelligence, scores of you think that if you come to church on Sunday morning and hear a sermon, you have performed your full obligation to Jesus Christ for His dying blood on Calvary's bitter tree. And the odd quarter that you gave to further the purpose of His kingdom—you congratulate yourself upon the amount you gave, except when you are commiserating yourself that you gave anything at all. And the bane and the pain and the shame of this I verily believe has driven lots of men out of the ministry. They could not stand it any longer. It looked to be a no-good performance, an effort having no triumph or success.

And you will regret this unused life when your hair is the color of mine and you look back over your life as I, every week, look back over mine, you will be sorry for the grain of wheat that you chewed up between your teeth and swallowed and consumed, and how you will wish you had put it in the ground in Christ's name, where it would bring you a harvest. If you had heard said to you the pitiful words I have had said to me more than once—"Oh, if only we had acquired wisdom in those earlier days, and if only we had acquired education and culture; if only we had developed talent and made something of ourselves, but now it is forever too late!" I wonder if some of you young people listening to me now will have to say that. What you could do with your voice, if you would sing with the passion of a Christ-possessed soul; what you could do with your lips, if you would go out with a Spirit-charged heart to tell people about Christ; what you could do with your dollars, if you invested them in the name of the Eternal God.

Oh, how you could cram these passing years full of eternal glory, if you would only dare live the straight Christian life as Christ asks you to live it. You will regret it; yes, you will regret it some day. Perhaps never till, all empty-handed, you pass into heaven and find there is nothing saved of you except your soul—lost everything else—all the years gone, all the privileges gone, nothing saved but your soul. And then how you will wish you had been among those who marched triumphantly up to the throne, bearing the marks of their conquests with them, to lay down great triumphs and glories at the crucified feet. Oh, how you will regret wasting your grain of wheat. And the way you abuse and wrongly use and consume this grain of wheat life is such a grief to Jesus Christ.

Did you ever look at some man who has lived, or is living, his own brave heroic life in Christ's name, and compare your life with his? And did you ever think of what would happen in the world and in the church, if all the people lived as that man or that woman lives? And did you ever think what a loss your uselessness is to Almighty God up in heaven, that He cannot get things done that otherwise would be done because of your unserviceableness, and that there is something that will remain unfinished forever because you refused to work? It hurts me a great deal to say these words to you and I wish I had not to say them, and I have almost a feeling of regret that I have said them. And yet I know that they ought to be said, and I know that I shall not be sorry in the judgment for having said them. And they all lead up to this—

“Nothing but leaves; the Spirit grieves
Over a wasted life,
Sin committed while conscience slept,
Promises made but never kept,
Hatred, battle, and strife.
Nothing but leaves!

Nothing but leaves; no garnered sheaves,
Of life's fair ripened grain,
Words, idle words, for earnest deeds,
We sow our seeds, lo, tares and weeds!
We reap with toil and pain
Nothing but leaves!

Ah, who shall thus the Master meet,
Bearing his withered leaves,
The Saviour looks for perfect fruit,
We stand before Him humbled, mute,
Awaiting the words He breathes,
'Nothing but leaves!'

The wasted grain of wheat!

But the rightly used grain of wheat, as illustrated by the rightly lived life, what of that? I must retrace my steps

a little to come to you and look at that grain of wheat, which is your life, and tell you what harvests you can get out of it if you like. There was a woman in Scotland who read of David Livingstone and realized that he must be hard worked over there in Africa, and she gave one or two hundred dollars to provide him with a man to care for and help him. And one day Livingstone shot at a lion and missed it. And from the rock the lion jumped and caught the great missionary in his jaws. And then the man that woman had provided saved the explorer's life! My soul, is not that woman proud of the money she invested in David Livingstone! And did she ever invest money so profitably as when she put that money in his body-servant?

And then think of your words. Why, I can look at a man over there, another one here, and another one yonder, who came to God because of a word my stammering tongue spoke; and if Christ should come in His glory now, those three men could introduce me to Jesus and say, "He is only a poor battered wreck, that preacher, but he pointed us to Christ." And in the coming years some of you will minister as a missionary, minister, Christian poet, scholar, statesman, and so my heart grows as light as the heart of a child as I forget all the hurts the foe has inflicted on me and I am once more the confident victor. For you can, with that life of yours, do wonderful things. You can make Jesus Christ happy by the way you use your life. Oh, I do not know but I would rather have been one of those Greeks than any other Greek in the world, because when they sought Him, they made his heart bound and his eye flash, and he straightened up his sagging shoulders as he said, "The harvest is coming, and the day is going to be born." Truly it was a massive thing to hearten Christ

on his way to the cross. And who knows what you can do, if only you will.

I call you to this life. I call you to it not to escape hell—though you will escape hell by living this life,—but I call you to it for the sake of the glory you can wreath' around the brow of the great Hero of eternity. I call you to it because of the jewel you can place by your consecrated life in the crown that will forever rest on the brow once torn with the thorns. I call you to it not for the money that is in it, for the reward for this sort of life God knows very well can never be given in money, so He does not talk about it. And not for any earthly gain or honor or renown, because the credit for having lived a life like this can only be expressed by the lips of God, and not by the tongue of a mortal. But I call you to it for Christ's sake. Will you not let your grain of wheat fall into the ground and die?

Do you students remember how in the French Revolution, at a critical hour, one city in France sent this message, "We are sending from our ranks to you six hundred men who know how to die"? That was the call a few years ago over on blood-drenched France—"Send us men, not to go on parade, or fire mock salutes of courtesy, but men who know how to die."

And that is what Christ wants, men who know how to die; not how to die in the fire as did the martyrs; not men to die on the rack; but men who know how to die while they live, who know how with Paul to "die daily"; who know how to push aside the honor of this world because they aspire to the honor connected with the other world; who know how to gird up the fragments of their failing strength and weave them into a cable, and with that cable draw men to the crucified Christ; men who know

how to die; not dilettante men, nor perfumed men, nor men who regard the apparel instead of the character, nor men who are seeking the easy place, nor men who are looking out for the emolument, but men who want to fight and want a real foe to fight and a real battle to surge around them; men who know how to die. Would to God we had twenty-five such men here who would be like the grain of wheat to fall into the ground and die and so bring forth the abundant harvest to the glory of God.

I shall say no more to you, though I had more prepared; for if what I have said does not constrain you to some action and inspire you to some Christian chivalry, and awaken in you some passionate desire to do something in the name of the Captain of your salvation, why, what is the good of further talk? Do you remember that I once told you what I thought was the greatest poem that came out of the great war? A thing in that poem appeals to me every day I live, and I wish it might to you. It is this line—

"Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to bear it high."

Oh, those men who are gone flung to us a great torch. They have not all been pygmies in the pulpit. There were Spurgeons, Moodys and Beechers, the sort of men under whom you people were converted and who baptized you thirty and forty years ago. And they flung to us a great torch.

Do you suppose your old mother would have listened to some of the preachers you run after? Do you suppose that your old father, with his character and intelligence, would submit to be treated by some man in the pulpit as though

he had neither intelligence nor character? And there were great men in the pew once. And they have flung to us a torch that is well worth bearing high. There were people who knew how to practice self-denial, and self-sacrifice, in the olden days. Some of you would never have had the education you possess, only your father worked the plow when his feet weighed tons, and his head thrummed and drummed with pain. And some of you would never have had the character you have, if your mother—who knew nothing perhaps about Shakespeare or Browning or how to vote—had not known how to wrestle with God for you and then wrestle with you for God. So take up the torch and bear it high!

Do you know the greatest slogan that came out of the war? It was given by those Canadian men who first inhaled the gas and did not know what it meant, and whose bodies while locked in slumber were stabbed to death. And it consisted of two words, “Carry on!” Oh, I wish I might recruit a few “Carry-on” Christians for my Lord this morning,—men who will not be little men whimpering and complaining and nursing some little pinprick as though it were a crucifixion, and looking for something to nourish a grouch over, and muttering as imbeciles might in the long ward of a state asylum.

But I wish I might recruit some men and women this morning who would say by their invested dollars, their used time, their embraced opportunity, their appreciated privileges, their dauntless heroism, their unswerving truthfulness, their world-capturing courage, their ceaseless loyalty to the right and true, “Carry on!”; men who would catch the torch flung by the failing hands of the past, and bear it upward and onward until they in turn drop into the ground, like grains of wheat, after giving the torch to

another generation. These are the people I wish God would put in this church. And these are the kind of people I want you church members to be. So heed well the text—"Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

II

THE BIBLE ONLY GOD COULD WRITE

“The sure word of prophecy.”—2 Peter 1:19.

THE tallest man of the Hebrew race is Moses. As he stands among Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Hosea you see him first, for he is head and shoulders above them all. Such a many-sided genius was he that he was warrior and statesman, philosopher and poet, and the giver of the law of God. And yet this greatest of those great men sinned! Oh, the weary ages looked for someone who would escape that blight, but they looked in vain. Follow these men down from Adam to Malachi in the Old Testament, and they all sinned. Moses' sin kept him out of Canaan—not so much his general sinfulness, as one particular sin, a sin that looked so pitifully small to bring down such a mountainous curse! For he was angry with Israel—and who would not have been. He called them rebels—and they looked wonderfully like rebels. In his hastiness he uttered a few petulant words; and because of that, the longing of his heart and the ambition of his life fell in ruins about him, and he never led Israel into Canaan.

Yet to his massive attainments and achievements he added a greater, just before he died, for he became a prophet. Do you know that in some respects the greatest prophecy of the Old Testament was uttered, not by Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Daniel, but by Moses? And if you have never read those closing chapters of Deuteronomy, commencing with the twenty-eighth, I will introduce you to a Yukon of

wealth this morning. Standing there nearly fifteen hundred years before the Christ,—away from us almost four millenniums,—he uttered in those golden speech prophecies that have been fulfilled all down the years, that are being fulfilled under our eyes this morning, and that reach far into the future. For, standing there, he said to those Israelites, “If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, He will bring a nation against thee, far away, from the end of the earth, a nation of a strange tongue, and he shall take thee and thy king captive.” They had no king then, remember, and the great Babylonian power was as unknown to them as the year 2721 is unknown to me. And yet this man stood on the hillcrest of prophetic vision and said, as it were, “Eight hundred years after I am dead there shall come up against you Nebuchadnezzar, leader of the Babylonian hosts, and he shall lead you into captivity.” And you know that that came to pass to the very letter.

But he went on with his great prophecy, saying, “If thou shalt sin after that, then the Lord again shall bring a nation against thee, swift as the eagle flieth.” And you know that Cowper, in a poem says of Rome’s power, “Where Cæsar’s eagles never flew.” If you want to see the fulfillment of the prophecy, turn over to our Lord’s words in Luke nineteen: “And He wept over the city and said, The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and shall lay thee in the dust, and shall leave in thee not one stone upon another.”

And then this man went on to a third prophecy in that same chapter, and he said, “Because of thy sin the Lord shall scatter thee among all nations, from one end of the earth unto the other. And among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest.

And thou shalt fear day and night, and in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even; and at even, Would God it were morning."

That prophecy has been in process of fulfillment all through these years since Christ, and the Jew today is known as the person of the restless foot. "No rest for the sole of thy foot"! Is that the end of the Jew? No, for in chapter thirty Moses says, "But if thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, then He shall turn again thy captivity, and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee, and bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it. And He shall do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." Such is in store for the man you call the "Sheenie," the Jew.

And now hear the greatest Jew of the New Testament, apart from our Lord: "I say then hath God cast away His people? God forbid, for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people. At the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and if the fall of the Jews be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of the Jews be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more shall their fulness be? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the reconciling of them be"—now listen—"but life from the dead." Recently a foolish preacher in Portland said that God had done with the Jews at Calvary. He has hardly begun with the Jews as yet!

Now, there is prophecy that has been fulfilled, that is being fulfilled under your notice today, and that will be fulfilled swiftly in the coming years. But how did Moses know all that? Push your inquiry until you touch God.

God alone told that to Moses. For this is the Book that God wrote. Think about Jesus Christ for a moment in connection with "the sure word of prophecy." Standing amid the ruins of the Garden of Eden, Eve heard God say this significant word: "Thy seed shall bruise the serpent's head." "Thy seed"—to a woman! the only time such language was ever addressed to a woman in the whole Bible. "Thy seed." "And He shall be of thee," of the woman; therefore the coming Redeemer mentioned amid the ruins of the Garden of Eden shall be human. He shall not be angelic; He shall not be seraphim or cherubim; He shall be "thy seed."

Move along through the years until you reach Abraham. And God said, "From thy loins shall come forth the people, of which people there shall come the deliverer of my people." The nationality of the coming Redeemer! He shall not be of Egypt, or of Babylon, or of Greece, or of Rome; He shall be a Jew. And "of the tribe of Judah"—not of Levi, the priestly tribe, whence he might well be expected, but he shall be of Judah. Now recall how, in Revelation five and verse five, you read that up in heaven they wondered if anyone could open the book of God's coming program; and the call was made for the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," who was able and worthy to open the book.

Then pass along till you hear David singing, of whom God says, "There shall come from thy house one who shall rule over my people. He shall sit upon the throne of his father David." He has never done it yet; He has got to do it; and He will do it in the near future:

Continue moving along, till you hear God saying, "He shall be born,"—this coming Deliverer—"in Bethlehem of Judea." You will remember how Jesus was about to be born in Nazareth. It seemed there was nothing surer in

the world. But Cæsar Augustus said, 'I want to know how many people I rule over; so have a census taken.' But Judaic law said that Joseph and Mary must go up to Bethlehem. So Cæsar Augustus must order a census, that God's prophecy might be fulfilled.

Moreover, "He shall be born of a virgin." And an apostle, a prophet, a gospel historian, an angel, and the Holy Ghost affirm that He was, though some people in our city and elsewhere say He was not, born of a virgin.

The prophecy ran on: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." When Herod was mad and would destroy all the male children of Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary had to take the Child by night and go down into Egypt. Why? To escape the wrath of Herod? No, but to fulfill the prophecy. Then they turned aside at Nazareth, and at Nazareth He was brought up. Why? Because there was no other place for Him to live? No, but because the prophet had declared, "He shall be called a Nazarene." Later, when at thirty years of age He preached His great sermon in the synagogue, I read, He took the Scripture and found the place where, seven hundred years before, God had written down the very text His Son would preach from in Nazareth that day: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me." Why did He take that text? Because in the Book God Himself wrote it had been affirmed for seven hundred years that He would do it! And then one day He said, "Go, and procure an ass, and the foal of an ass, and bring it to me." And He sat himself thereon and rode into Jerusalem. Why? That it might be fulfilled which had been spoken by Zachariah long centuries before—"Rejoice, Jerusalem, thy King cometh, seated on the foal of an ass."

Oh, I am in my element now, and I wish the hour might be lengthened into a day! But once more think about the

prophecies fulfilled in Jesus during His last day, before the crucifixion. Centuries before, Zachariah said—and I think I had better read you the very words, because you may hardly credit it unless I read them from the Book—Zachariah said, “A goodly price that I was priced at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.” Now wait till the centuries go by, and then come into the New Testament: “And Judas covenanted with them to deliver Jesus unto them for thirty pieces of silver.” Why did they not haggle with Judas, and bring him down to twenty-nine or twenty pieces? Because there was the prophecy of Zachariah standing in the way. There had got to be thirty pieces of silver. And filled with remorse Judas came and cast those thirty pieces of silver down upon the temple floor. Why? Was there no other place to cast them? Yes, but Zachariah, hundreds of years before, said they should be cast down on the temple floor, and the accursed hand of Judas can cast them on no other spot in God’s wide world. And the potter—what has the potter got to do with it? And they said, “We cannot take these thirty pieces of silver, the price of blood, and use them for anything except”—except what? “To buy the potter’s field for a place to bury strangers in.” How do you feel about it? Hundreds and hundreds of years before, in the Book God wrote, He put down “thirty pieces of silver,” “temple,” “potter.”

But let us go on. Seven hundred years before it took place, God, in this Book, said Christ would be led as a sheep dumb before her shearers. And seven centuries afterward, as I read in the gospel, Herod was glad to see Him and ask Him questions, and “He answered him never a word.” “With His stripes we are healed,” said the prophet, seven centuries before Christ was born. Yesterday

I read through my tears a line in the New Testament, "Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him," and I saw down underneath the passing local circumstances the ancient word of the Lord, "With His stripes we are healed."

Furthermore the same prophet said, "He shall be numbered with the transgressors"—and they hung Him up between two thieves. "And He shall make intercession for the transgressors"—and He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they shall taunt Him, and say, "Come down from the cross; if God will have Him, let Him deliver Him"—and for one thousand years before, in Psalm twenty-two, that identical sentence was written down. Also in that same book of Psalms, one thousand years old when Jesus was crucified, I read, "They gave me gall." Coming over into the gospel I read how they put to His mouth gall and myrrh, and how He refused to take it. The stupefying drink He would not have, but would face His God awake! I read, again, "They gave me vinegar to drink"—and over here in the gospels I read how one of the soldiers took a sponge, and dipped it in vinegar, and put it to His mouth. In the same book of Psalms—remember, one millennium old—I read, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—and in the gospels I hear Jesus on the cross, one thousand years afterward, saying those very words. I read in the Psalms that He will say, "Father, into thy hand I commit my spirit"—the very sentence He uttered from the cross.

At Calvary, too, I stand and see the soldiers come to view the result of their work on those three men, the two thieves and the Christ. They break the legs of the first thief; coming to Jesus, and seeing He is dead already, they forbear from the useless task of breaking His legs; but they break the legs of the second thief. Why did they

not break the legs of the central body? Because, centuries before, it was written down, here in the Old Testament, "A bone of Him shall not be broken." They broke the flesh of His hands, His feet, His side, His brow, but they must not break a bone, for God had said it should not be. But a soldier said, "Dead or not, there is nothing like making sure," and he thrust his short stabbing sword into the side of Jesus, and forthwith there came out blood and water. And the gospel historian remembered the prophecy of the Old Testament, and he said, "That it might be fulfilled which was written by the prophet, They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced."

Now there hangs the body, and Joseph and Nicodemus—the only two rich men closely associated with the life of Jesus on the earth that I know about—said, "Give us His body and we will bury it," for Isaiah, seven hundred years before, was told by God to say that "Jesus shall be with the rich in his death."

Oh, my friends, it is the Book God wrote! I never mind it when they tell me I am fossilized because I still believe in that Book. Thank God, I do still believe in it! I have convincing reason for believing in that Book; and if any man in this city will take the spectacles of prejudice from before his eyes and read it, he too shall come to the determination that it is the Book which God wrote, because nobody else could have written it.

Here in my hand is the first Bible I ever had after I became a Christian. You see how it is worn with just turning over its leaves. It has been with me all over the world. There is not a page of it but is marked. That is my diary, that is my biography, that is my life! And oh, what I could give you out of that Book! God said unto Israel fifteen hundred years before Christ, "Your very

roads, your highways, shall be desolate." Now hear Volney, French traveler, philosopher and skeptic: "Everywhere in Palestine I saw roads extremely bad. There are no great roads. You never see a wagon or a cart in all the land." Behold the skeptic witnessing to the fulfillment of God's words to the letter!

Would you like another? "The stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, Why was this done, this desolation?" Hear this same French traveler and skeptic: "I wandered over the country. Great God, from whence proceed these melancholy revolutions? Whence comes this destruction? Where has this population gone?" And let me read you this, because the very word used by this traveler I remember as the very word of God. This is what God said: "I will make your land desolate; everyone that passeth thereby shall be astonished." Now hold that word in your memory. Volney says, "So feeble a population in such a country may well excite our astonishment."

God said again, "Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps." Gibbon, who hated Christianity as he never hated the Devil, wrote, "And a plow-share was driven over the consecrated ground of Jerusalem as a sign of perpetual interdiction."

Tyre was in her glory when God said, "It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." And Volney said, "I was amazed at its reduction to an obscure village, where the few people lived obscurely on the result of fishing, and spread their nets on the rock to dry."

The book God wrote! Do not talk to me about it being a bible among bibles. Do not talk to me about it being written by a lot of non-Christian Jews. Who did all that prophetic talking? How came it that men like Moses and

Isaiah and Jeremiah and Zachariah stood up so high that they saw the coming centuries and millenniums? Why, they were lifted up in the hand of God, even the "God who in olden time spoke by the prophets," when "holy men of old spake as they were moved, carried along by the Holy Ghost."

I wish I might tell you more about the prophecies that are to be fulfilled, in our observation, in just a little while now. "In the last days"—see if you recognize this—"men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, false accusers, fierce, despisers of the good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." That is the full-length picture of hundreds and thousands of people in every city of the land.

More of it: "In the last days they shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and lies of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy." And what do you think of this: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables"? Old wives!—Madame Blavatsky, Madame Tingley, Madame Besant, and Mary Baker Eddy! Surely they are turning to the old wives' fables! And here is a book that said nineteen hundred years ago exactly what would occur in the last times.

I close with the reading of one prophecy that may be fulfilled in your presence: "They who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall not go before them who are asleep, for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now how are you treating the only Book God ever wrote as He wrote that Book? How are you treating it? Have you read God's Book? Oh, they say to me once in a while on the street, "Have you read So-and-So's book?" Say, have you read God's Book? What do you think of it? How are you heeding God's Book? Are you straightening out your life according to it? Ah, one of you asked me last week to recommend some good books to read. All right, here is the first: read this Bible, the Book that God wrote.

And now comes the last word to myself and to you. Here is the Book God wrote. Have I read it yet? Am I heeding it? When it rises up before me in judgment, will it condemn me? Will you not read your Bible more? Read it through, and read it carefully. Watch what you read, and your faith in the Bible will become as sure as the mountains, as certain as the fixed planets of God, and you will know that you "have not followed cunningly devised fables," but that you have "the sure word of prophecy."

III

HIS SERMON ABOUT BREAD

“From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.”—John 6:66.

THAT was the sequel to the greatest sermon, in my judgment, that Jesus ever preached. And I am coming to you tonight as though I had been an eye witness, and an ear witness also, of that great sermon, and of its startlingly disappointing effects.

Our Lord was thronged by a great multitude that day, as was often His experience, for the turbulent crowd surged about Him, and He was the excitement of the occasion; and yet at the last not a single finger was raised to wipe away the spittle and the blood from His cheek as He hung on the cross; for though He had been the center of the surging throng, alone He trod the winepress. This great preacher was in nowise deceived by the audience that surrounded Him, for it was given Him to know what is in man—a discernment that God wisely denies to us today. He knew what they thought and wished and purposed, these multitudinous people who waited on the words from His lips; so at the commencement of His sermon He rebuked His congregation, and said, “I know why you are here, you are here to procure a meal, and not for the high purpose of glorifying God.”

What a thunderbolt to drop among them—to say it was selfishness that brought them, that the motive under which they moved pertained rather to the stomach than to the soul. And then He advised those people to work, not for

the bread that perisheth but for the Bread that gives eternal satisfaction to the soul. Then the audience talked back to the preacher, and said, "What shall we do to work the works of God?" And He, with the divine audacity that always characterized Him, replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on me whom God hath sent."

I make no apology for my feeling and thought, that if He were not God who said that, He must have been a fool; for when men said, "What shall we do to work the works of God?" he must be divine or lunatic who would reply, "The great work of God, the thing God wants you to do, is to believe in me." So they answered back again, "What sign do you give that we may know we ought to believe in you?" And then, proving how true was His scathing rebuke, they added, "Moses gave our fathers bread in the wilderness. What is your sign?"

Jesus replied, "Moses gave your fathers no bread, for Moses was only the instrument and the channel through which the manna came from my Father to your fathers; but I bring you the Bread of Life." And then they said, proving a second time how keenly discerning was His judgment of them, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread." He answered, "I am the Bread of Life." And they looked at Him in wonder, for they were prepared to receive from His hand bread that would satisfy the natural craving of the body; or perhaps, in addition to that, they would be prepared to receive some instruction regarding the sustentation of the spirit's life; but for Him to stand there and say, "I am not as Moses, a mere instrument in the hands of God, I am the Bread of Life," they were not prepared for that.

And so as I looked and listened I observed the audience change to an extent. "The Jews therefore murmured."

The cause of their murmuring was the utterance of Christ, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." And they said, "How can He say that He came down from heaven? Do not we know His mother? And do not we know where He lives?" The great Preacher looked at them and said, "You are murmuring. Now let me put my finger on the cause of your murmuring. No man will accept me as the Bread of Life except my Father work a work in that man's soul."

What a terrific statement! "You are listening to me," He says to the thousands, "but there is no one among you who will believe me, accept me and be saved by me, unless he shall come under the dominance of the Power that is supernatural and eternal." And that law has obtained ever since, even the law Christ enunciated when He said, "No man cometh unto me except my Father draw him." For the natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

Jesus continued speaking, "I am qualified, and I alone, to give to you the Bread from Heaven, because"—hear this, Unitarian—"I alone have seen the Father." But so did Moses, and Isaiah, and Abraham, you say. No; "I alone have seen the Father; I only therefore am qualified to lead where no other ever led, and instruct where no other ever taught, and disclose where no other ever revealed, because I am tall enough to look into the eyes of the Father; I am the Bread of Life." He said, "Your fathers ate the manna that my Father gave them through the hands of Moses, and they are dead"—a truth no one among them could controvert.

But He hastened on from the sleeping multitudes who had died to say, "Who so partakes of the Bread which I give shall live forever; and though death overtake his body

I will raise him up at the last day. For if a man partake of me he shall never die, but when his body dies I will raise him up, and in me he shall possess eternal life." As you listen, learn again that Jesus Christ is God, and beside Him there is no Saviour.

Then one great solace Jesus administered to His own soul which impressed me with peculiar force. He said, "You will not receive me." And out of his sad yet luminous eyes He looked upon those people, whom He knew in a short time would cry, "Crucify him!" But I say He put this solace in His own spirit, as He said, "All in this congregation whom the Father hath given me shall come to me." Ah, no man will long prosecute the work of God in the midst of this wicked world, and prosecute it as God would have it done, unless he lays hold of the Divine purpose, so that there shall come to him also that poise in God which makes him move as a glacier adown the mountain side, or as the surging tide climbing the beach, or as a star moving along in its orbit; for even Christ availed Himself of that encouragement and support.

And then the audience shifts again, for I read, "The Jews strove with one another." They said, "What is this we hear, that He will give us His flesh to eat?" What now did Jesus do—recede from His high, bold stand? No! He never did that. But He said in the oriental speech, "Except you become so intimately connected with me, and so identified with me, that you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you." Who is this that dares to talk in this high fashion, and who says, "Unless you become so vitally and indissolubly connected with me that it is with you as though you had eaten my flesh and had drunk my blood, you have no life in you"? Who is this that looks into the eyes of the world and says, "Having

done all, you are only as corpses unless you have eaten my flesh and drunk my blood and have My infinite life pulsing in your souls?"

And now I come to my text. The multitude heard and said, "Do we need that bread"? and the Jews murmured, and said, "How can he be bread from heaven"? And then they strove among themselves, saying, "How can we eat his flesh and drink his blood"? Even many who were close to Him were offended, for I read, "And many of His disciples said, 'This is a hard saying.'" Poor Christ! He is about to be wounded in the house of His friends!

Let me tell you a beautiful story about Wendell Phillips, the great Abolitionist orator. He met with all sorts of persecution, scandal and spite. One day he had lectured, holding his own like a true man in the teeth of a hostile audience that cursed and threatened, and when the meeting was over somebody said, "You had better stay here under cover, for the weather is bad and the crowd is threatening." But he said, "Twelve miles to go, and then I shall meet Ann Phillips!" And so back of Wendell Phillips, the hero of abolition times, stands Ann Phillips; and the orator knew when he got home there would be the strengthening embrace of the woman who loved him, and the light from the eyes that evermore welcomed him.

Poor Christ! His own disciples said, "This is a hard saying." And they did not stop there—nor does anybody ever stop there. But they went on from the speech to the Speaker. They said, "*This is a hard saying*; who can hear Him?" That is where it always lands. Commence as far off as you may by questioning the accuracy of His Book, or the binding claim of His day, and ultimately you come to this, "Who can hear him?"

"And from that time many of His disciples went back."

We call people backsliders; but I should think the real word would be back-turners. His disciples went back. They did not slip back accidentally. They said, "It is a hard saying; who can hear Him?—we won't," and they went back. And they have been doing it ever since. I suppose Christ never kept five percent of the people He fascinated and charmed and attracted. And I am talking to men and women tonight who once crowded close up to Christ, but He could not keep you, you went back. You know where you are now. They went back permanently, and walked no more with Him; they parted company forever. They said, not "Good night" or "Good morning," and assuredly they said not "Goodbye," nor "God be with you," but they said, "We are through; we are finished; we have made the decision irrevocably and eternally." And never from that day to this did they walk another step with Jesus Christ. Oh, do not bother me with your Arminianism or Calvinism, but look at the ghastly fact, that they were enrolled with His disciples, but they became offended with Him, and walked no more with Him, even as has happened to thousands who are on the earth tonight, and to many in this city, and to some in this audience.

But He was a great preacher, and that sermon on the Bread of Life is a marvelous sermon. And what did He get out of it all? Murmuring and strife! "And they went back and walked no more with Him." And He turned to His little body-guard, and asked them a question that has tears in it, and hoarse sobbing, and heart-ache, and heart-break: "Will ye also go away?" Ah, there never was so tender a heart as the heart of Jesus. We boast that we never cry, but He, the Son of God, cried often. We pride ourselves on our poise, that nothing disturbs us; but He was often disturbed. And so with an infinite tenderness

He says, "Will ye also go away? The multitude has gone! Are you going too?" And it seems to me that He looks at you and He looks at me at this moment, and He says, "Are you going?" Oh, I could name preachers, deacons, Sunday-school teachers, those who prayed in meeting, testified, and those who communed at the Lord's Supper, who have gone away. Why should not I go? What is going to hold me? "Will ye also go away?"

Now, I do not talk much about psychology—that over-worked word—but do you not see the psychology of Peter's reply to that heart-searching question of the Christ? What are they going to do, that handful that still remains with Him, when the surging multitude goes home. Well, we know they have got to do one of two things: They have got to be influenced by the murmuring and strife and lapsing; or else they have to burn their bridges behind them. You know that is what they have to do; they cannot do anything else. So Simon says, "Will we go? In God's name where should we go? You have the words of eternal life."

That is the decision I humbly come to now. I see them going; I am affected by their going. Sometimes I grieve, sometimes I grow angry. They are going! Complacently, and I suppose compassionately, a man informed me some time ago that I was all right except for a fool notion that I had about the Bible, and that I should be thought intellectual if I turned away from the Bible and acted as sane men should act. Well, what am I to do? Why, I would sooner blow my brains out than join the receding crowd; and I would sooner die true than live on, a poor fake. So I stand alongside Peter and I answer Christ's question, "Will ye also go away?" with Peter's reply, "Where should I go, if I wanted to go? Where should I go?"

Oh, when the child lies dead in the little coffin, Jesus has a knack of talking about the Kingdom of Heaven, where the children go, that actually supersedes anything I ever heard anybody else say under those circumstances. When a poor Peter makes a fool of himself, this Jesus knows how to look at that Peter as nobody else out of God's heaven ever looked. And when a sinner, near despair, went to Him over three decades ago and said, "I feel that I merit hell, but save me!" He did for me what nobody else ever did, and in heaven or hell I will be true to Him, and I will say, no matter what happens, what comes or what goes, "You have the words of eternal life! They can all go, if go they must, but I by Thy grace and help will stand by Thee." What do you say?

Now this sermon which I have reported and reviewed is marvelously pertinent to us today, for it is the spirituality of Christ's gospel that men hate. They are lined up against His Book. They are hostile to His day. A church in New York City, by public resolution, has dropped Jesus from any mention under its roof. And this is only indicative of the fact that, without public resolution, other churches have dropped Him, too. Tonight the minority of the citizens of this city are in churches. You know that, do you not? The majority are in the theaters. And the question Christ once asked rings in my ears every day: "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" or will it have clean gone?

The sermon is pertinent, and the question of Jesus is personal. It comes to me as if there were no other soul in the church. It comes to you the same way. My brother, so far as I know, you and I have got to do one thing now. We have got to get up closer to Jesus Christ or go farther away from Jesus. There is no middle ground visible to me. And if tonight I say I will not come closer, in that

very act there is a repudiation of His claim on my full allegiance,—a rejection that pushes me farther away, and I may join the crowd who went back and walked no more with Him. Choose you what you will do.

IV

SIX PICTURES OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 26.

IT IS my purpose to show you six pictures of Jesus that are all found in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

The first introduces you to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest of the Jews; and with him were the priests who taught the oracles of God, and led the people in their devotions; and along with them the elders of the people who had experience in the Book and providence of God.

In the throng there was a disciple of Jesus, who had heard the parables and seen the miracles and listened to the wonderful teaching of the Son of God and who was so familiar with the inner life of Jesus that he really knew where Christ went to pray in the nighttime. A wonderful gathering doubtless for the purpose of reading the Old Testament Scriptures, and telling their experiences concerning Israel's God, and laying plans for the betterment of Jerusalem and the uplift of all believing souls! And possibly Judas would have some suggestions about crowning Christ King of Israel! It would be natural to think and to suppose all that. But this is what occurred. The clink of silver was heard—thirty pieces. For an offering to God? No. Blood money, every bit of it! For in that interview Judas said, "You give me thirty pieces of silver, and I will lead you to the secret prayer place of Jesus and hand Him over to you, and see that you hold Him fast." And in that gathering with the chief priest

Caiaphas, and the disciple of the Lord named Judas, and the priests and elders of the people, the plot was laid to crucify the Son of God.

These modern people who have undertaken the revision of the Bible are a peculiar lot. They are now rehabilitating Judas Iscariot, and they say his motive in betraying Jesus was a high and praiseworthy motive, that he wanted to bring Christ up to the point of declaring Himself King with accompanying miraculous signs. What a lot those people know! Only unfortunately they know such a lot that is not so, for Matthew, of Judas, says, "He sought opportunity to betray Jesus." And Mark thought Judas studiously endeavored to betray Christ. And Luke says, "Satan entered into the man." And John says, "He was a thief." And Jesus said, "It had been better for that man had he never been born." And in the teeth of all that, these modern critics want to make a praiseworthy character of a man who saw more in nineteen dollars and fifty cents than he saw in the Son of God? That is the first of the six pictures I told you to look at in Matthew twenty-six.

And the second takes us to the house of Simon. A wonderful concourse of people was there! Simon who had been a leper; Lazarus who had been dead; Mary who anointed the body of Jesus; and Martha who prepared the meal for Him and His disciples. And Mary came with spikenard ointment very precious and poured it out on Jesus Christ. The disciples murmured and said, "Why waste so much money?" Oh, that lets a lurid light in on those disciples, for, you know, you mothers—and the circle may be broadened, we all know, to some extent—that extravagance with love is never waste. The best is not good enough for the beloved one.

I say it puts them in an ill light that they should have

thought anything wasted that was poured out lavishly on Jesus Christ. And with the fine penetration of the Son of God, and with His chivalrous courtesy—He who was God's perfect gentleman, as George Herbert phrased it—Jesus Christ said, "Trouble not the woman, for this is why she anoints me now; it is against my burying." We sometimes say—indeed I think it is proverbial with us—that a woman's perception equals a man's judgment. From the reading of the Gospels it appears that this woman alone had so fathomed the deep saying of Jesus as to understand that the One the disciples thought was to be a crowned King of Jerusalem was to die. And with her loving homage she brought the ointment of anointing and put it upon the Christ. "Against the day of my burying."

Then you come to the third picture, in the house of an unknown man. Jesus said to His disciples, "Go over into that village and you will meet a man; and the man will be carrying a pitcher of water. Stop him, and say this: 'The Master says, Where is the chamber where I can observe the passover feast with my disciples?'" And those men to whom Christ spoke were so far versed in His wisdom, unerring and sure, that they walked off in the path indicated, met the man with the pitcher of water, said the words Jesus had placed on their lip, and in the upper room they celebrated the passover feast.

There is a lovely tradition about that upper room, that it was consecrated to Jesus; and that after His resurrection He appeared in that upper room to the assembled disciples; and more beautiful still, that on the day of Pentecost they were gathered in that very room when there came the sound of rushing wind and the appearance of the tongues of flame. And there He observed the passover feast.

Do you know what the passover was? Oh, that Israel-

itish history is so remarkable! God said to Moses, "Tell Pharaoh that I strike once more, and for the last time. Unless the King of Egypt lets Israel go, at midnight there shall ascend a wail from palace and hovel, because the first-born child is slain. And for your protection, you Hebrews put blood on the doorpost, and any blood-protected house will be spared." And that was the passing over of the destroying angel, which became the heart of the passover feast. And having observed that, Jesus instituted another supper. We call it the Lord's Supper—a scene I hardly care to talk about, for it appears too sacred. He said to His disciples, "Eat this bread; it is my body broken for you. And drink this wine; it is my blood shed for you." I sometimes wonder why Christians dare absent themselves from the Lord's Supper; and sometimes I wonder how I ever dare present myself at the Lord's Supper. "My body broken for you. My blood shed for you." Men and women we ought to love Him more and we ought to serve Him better.

And then the fourth picture is out by the Mount of Olivet, from the summit of which Jesus looked down over the city of Jerusalem. And John who watched the Master closely saw the tears welling up in the eyes of Christ and overflowing the lids and running down His cheeks and dropping off on to the long, flowing robe that legend says the sisters of Bethany wove for Him. And as John listened, he heard Jesus saying—I think half to himself—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood under her wing, but ye would not." The Mount of Olives!

Do you know that one of the proofs that He is King when He comes back will be that He shall plant his feet upon the Mount of Olives, and the mountain shall split

asunder, and there shall be an awful valley between the split mountain of Olivet? It cannot be, I heard them say last week! O my friends, we never betray our folly more startlingly than when we deny that all things are possible to the eternal and infinite God. And out by that mountain He made a speech, and the speech made my heart ache last week as I studied it. He had the disciples with Him, as He said, "I want to remind you of a prophecy: I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." They knew He was the Shepherd, for He had said in their hearing, "I am the Good Shepherd." And He is to be smitten! And they, the sheep for whom He said He would lay down His life, were to be scattered! How do you suppose those disciples felt as they listened to that speech on the Mount of Olives? And then He went on to say to Peter, "Tomorrow will not pass but you will once, twice, thrice, deny me." And Peter—we all love him because we are like him—said, "I shall never do that." But you know the tragic story how he did it. And do you know I felt last week as if I could not longer ponder that speech but for one little word. Jesus said, "After I am risen again." Ah, it was crucifixion, but thank God it was resurrection and ascension also!

And then the fifth picture is in a garden. I like to remember Lord Bacon said, "God was the first to plant a garden, the garden of Eden." There man fell. And I love to think that at the last they laid the dead body of Jesus Christ in a garden—for in the garden there was a grave. And somehow it makes all gardens sacred ever since. And it was in a garden that Jesus Christ bent Himself down under the heavy weight of the world's sin; and the burden was so intolerable He sweat as it were great drops of blood, and fell upon His face, and three times over

said the same prayer; "If it be possible, let this cup pass: nevertheless Thy will be done." And may I revert to a sentence I used a while ago. Is it not intolerable that a disciple of Jesus, knowing the prayer place of the Master, for nineteen dollars and fifty cents led his murderers into the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ was at His prayers? In that garden too, man again failed.

If some of you know why Jesus took three disciples into that garden with Him, I wish you would tell me. O how I have longed to know! They were no good to Him, for they all went to sleep. You can hardly believe it until you find it in the Word of God, that three men, Peter, James, and John, while Christ agonized in prayer even to blood-letting, went to sleep. And O the wonderful Christ, when He returned and found them sleeping in spite of His sad command, "Watch, while I pray," excused them, and said what only the loving Christ would ever have dreamed of saying, "Your spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

They tell me down the street He was not the Son of God. I know He was by His chivalrous defense of those sleeping men. I want to take time to tell you one sentence uttered in that garden; I think it is so prophetic of these days. He said, "Could you not watch with me one hour?" Would you let me change the emphasis a bit and then I need not explain it further. "Could ye"—I did not expect the Jews to do it. "Could ye not *watch*?"—I did not ask you to shed blood. "Could ye not watch *with me*?"—I demanded not that you should watch alone, but could you not watch with me? "Could ye not watch with me *one hour*?"—you have been with me three years; could ye not watch one hour?

And then the last picture, back in the house of Caiaphas. And I read two words there, and I hardly know how to

say them. I have never doubted that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And over thirty years have gone by since He said to me, "I am your Saviour," and I believed Him on that June night the other side of the Atlantic, and I have believed Him every night since, and I believe Him tonight. I believe He made the worlds, and I believe in Him all things hang together, as the Apostle says. I believe He will come to judge the world. I believe He will be the crowned King of eternity.

And yet I have to tell you two words about that last picture of Christ. "And they"—here is one of them—"spat in His face"! The last indignity, expressive of the deepest contempt, crystalized in an act of the uttermost loathing. They did that to the Son of God! "They spat in His face." Have you anticipated the second word? "And they smote with their hands" the Speaker of the parable of the Prodigal Son, the One who said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." And angels saw on the face of that Christ, human spittle; and they saw on the face of that Christ the red ridges human fingers had made by striking His flesh. And He suffered all the shame and indignity and pain for me. That is why I cannot keep my peace when they say He was merely a good man, for a man who said, "I and my Father are one," is not a good man if He is not the Son of God, but he is a liar. So how can I stand still when they tell me the Christ who has been my Saviour for long years was worse than am I? For it never occurred to Peter, John or Paul to say, "I and my Father are one."

Do you know that I have two wonders as I turn away from this last picture. The one is about myself, and the other about you. I wondered at six o'clock tonight how ever I could preach this sermon, because you see I am talk-

ing about the best Friend I ever had; better than my father, better than my brother; the best Friend I ever had. And I am talking about the One who saved me. I should have been sure of hell but for Jesus Christ. He saved me. And how is it I can talk—not, thank God, calmly—for there are hurricanes in my heart and great tempests of emotion that I have with fierce effort to keep under control or I could not frame sentences—but how can I do it is my wonder. How can I do it at all?

I had a brother as straight as the barrel of a gun, his steely blue eyes fearless of everything under God's sky, who, prematurely as we say, went into the silence. And "they spat in his face, and smote him with their hands," how could I tell that if it happened to Charlie? How do I manage to tell it when it happened to Christ? And my other wonder is about you. There sat a man in that aisle this morning who said to me at the front of this pulpit, "I believe in Jesus as my Saviour, and I will be baptized because He tells me to. But not yet." Why? "Well, I will think about it." And "they spat in His face, and smote Him with their hands." And to that man who sat in that aisle this morning that same Jesus says, "Take up thy cross, and follow me." And the reply of the man is, "I will think about it." How do we do it? What is the matter with us? Has sin dried up the emotions of our souls? Are we incapable of feeling? Or has the damned miasma of unbelief settled down upon us like the dread darkness of an Egyptian plague? What is the matter with us?

When I was a student a kind old professor loved me enough to tell me he thought I could make a speaker, and he did his best to make me one, but badly failed, though he gave me some lessons that I have not entirely disre-

garded, for I remember that he bade me always close the speech, by a cleverly constructed sentence, having in it a picture that is pleasing, or a rhyme that catches and entralls the audience, and so strive to sit down with the people to whom the speech had been directed full of wonder and praise. And I never tried to do it. And, thank God, I could not succeed if I did. O people, I am not talking cant, but I am telling the truth, that I do not care what you think of me if you will only fall into loyal love with my Hero of these six pictures; and I do not care what you say to me if only to Him you say, "My Lord and my God, my Saviour and my King."

What will you do with Jesus? You have seen Him tonight. I have no trick of speech, oratory, or art; I am only a plain man telling you the things I know and have felt, in the quickest, cleanest-cut way I know how. And you are listening now because through the words and away from the speaker you have been hearing and seeing Someone else. Now what will you do with Him? Suppose He came in through the door, and slowly majestically walked down the aisle; and suppose He came up onto the platform and I moved away from Him; and suppose He said, "Whosoever will, let him come unto Me." What would you do? What would I do? I have sinned, and I have been a sorry specimen of a Christian; and many times I have thought nothing but the bloody cross of Calvary can ever keep me out of hell; and yet if He stood here now and said that, I honestly believe I would say, "Well, Lord, it is 'whosoever,' and that means me; and here I come, and you will not cast me out." Brother, sister, do the same.

Some of you have not got long to live. You had better close in with Jesus. Some of you have had awful memories while I have been speaking. You remember when He was

more to you than He is tonight. You had better get back to Him. Some of you have heavy hearts, full of what Shakespeare calls "the stuff that preys upon the mind." You know what that is. Better get rid of it by coming to Jesus. And some of you feel that every friend you have, if knowing you as you are, would turn from you far away. But oh, my friend, Jesus knows what you are, and He says, "Come!" So I move that we go to Jesus and tell Him the whole thing, and ask His mercy and His pardon, and receive His salvation.

V

SAVED BY HIS LIFE

“Saved by His life.”—Romans 5:10.

IHURRY to say we must ever remember that we are saved by the surrendered life of Jesus Christ. I occasionally meet a man who tells me about salvation by character. Well, it must be the character of Jesus Christ, then; for all our righteousness is as filthy rags, the Bible says, and experience corroborates the Bible. Oh, never get away from the old truth, “What can wash away my stain? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

It is in disrepute in some quarters, is this doctrine, and it is being questioned in high places; but in the highest place of all there is no question regarding this great fact. For up on the golden floor of Paradise, where the angels sing, the redeemed sing the song of “Him who loved us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Among the heroes of the faith there is no uncertainty regarding the atonement. With four millenniums of history—most of it religious—behind him, the great preacher of the Jordan looked at Jesus Christ as He walked, and he said, with what weight of meaning we may dimly imagine, “Behold the Lamb of God who beareth away the sin of the world.”

And that evangelist who leaned his head upon the bosom of Jesus Christ, who of himself over and over says, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” he has no uncertainty regarding the way by which men are saved; for, writing his

first epistle, he says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

Peter may have stumbled in the hall of the high priest, but he did not stumble in regard to the fundamental fact of our holy religion, for he assures us that Christ on the cross died for us, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

Paul knows no Saviour but Jesus, and no fountain opened for sin except the fountain that was opened on Golgotha's lonely brow.

And, greater far than them all, Jesus Christ, said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," and this He said signifying by what death He should die.

And now, after talking of those who sing of the atonement in heaven, and of the great apostles who believed it, and of Christ who affirmed it, I come limping along with my own experience, and say that I know what saved me; for

"I saw One hanging on a tree
In agony and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood."

And He told me He was dying on that cross for the salvation of my soul; and, whether I be found on the floor of heaven or in the core of hell, I know nobody ever saved me but Christ, and Christ saved me by that cross.

But we are saved by the life of Jesus before ever He came into this world at all. Some there are who tell us that Jesus was only a man. I should be very sorry to believe that. And whenever I hear Unitarianism make that speech, I feel like the old woman who once heard Charles Bradlaugh, the skeptic, make an affirmation that Christianity had lost its power; and right in the middle of the meeting she cried out, "Thank God, that's a lie!"

I am not saved by a man. I am saved by One who was able to say, "Before Abraham was, I am." I am saved by One concerning whom John said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I am saved by One who of Himself truthfully said, "I and my Father are one." Why, people who tell us that Jesus did not live prior to His incarnation in Bethlehem have less discrimination than had the only infidel woman I ever met in my life. She came into my study one Sunday night in San Diego, and said, "I want to say this word to you: You have something I lack—what is it?"

I said, "You have the wrong word, madam. You should not say 'something,' you should say 'someone.' "

"Then who is it that makes the difference which I detected while you were preaching, between you and me?"

And I said, "His name is Jesus Christ." "Oh," she said, "I think I ought to tell you I am an infidel."

I said, "Thank you for the information. Do you know anything about Christ?"

She said, "I do. I am a woman of culture. I know there was the historical Jesus. I know He lived. I know He died. He was the best man who ever lived."

I said, "Madam, the Lord has delivered you into my hand, for good men do not lie, do they?"

"They do not."

"And He was the best man who ever lived?"

"Yes."

"Then He would not lie, would He?"

"No."

"Then He said, I and my Father are one."

She had candor if she had nothing else, for she said, "My whole case is gone; I see now your attitude; it is right."

But, alas, poor soul! she went out without looking up to the light God had granted her. But, you see, even she had discrimination to see that when Jesus affirmed Himself to be one with God He was affirming that he was more than man, that He could rank with God the Father; and He had reference to the life prior to the incarnation which enables Him to be our Saviour.

I am sure none of us make enough of this. See the shining stars, and think how millenniums equal to them in number would be exhausted in computing the lifetime of Jesus Christ—yea, would only have commenced to illustrate the fact that He has lived forever. Think of the multitudinous grains of sand on the sea-shore, and then remember that if every sand-grain stood for a millennium and if all the sand-grains on all the shores were counted you have not gotten back to the starting point of Jesus Christ! He lived forever and ever. He is the One without beginning. There was no commencement of His life. When on that cross, dying to save you and me, He said, "It is finished," He gave up an earthly life that commenced in Bethlehem of Judea; but His life as the Son of God never had commencement and never can have close.

But then we are saved by His life after His incarnation until His crucifixion. I do not often indulge fancies, but there is one I indulge quite frequently. I wonder sometimes if God could have saved the world by allowing Jesus to come down here in the morning, a full-grown man, dying on the cross, and going back to heaven at sundown of the same day. I do not know whether God could have saved man that way, but I do know I am very thankful that He did not.

Now just suppose, for a moment, that Jesus came into the world with the sun one morning, was crucified, and

went back to God as the sun slid in the sea that same night; and suppose that that saved us. How much we should have lost by that method of being saved. What should we have lost? Well, we should have lost the incomparable life that is at once a despair and a challenge and a hope; a despair, as we bring our own imperfection up against the perfectness; a challenge, as He says, "My life is in you"; and a hope, as the apostle declares, "Some day we shall see Him and be like Him."

That wonderful life! Have we ever weighed the significance of the fact that twenty centuries have been peering into that life of Christ and scrutinizing every corner of it, looking into every secret cranny? And men who hate righteousness have hoped in their hearts above everything else they could find some defect, some flaw. And after two millenniums they all gather, friend and foe, and they all say, "The perfect life, the one life in which no word ever regretted was spoken, the one life in which no deed ever to undergo repentance was wrought."

We should have missed the record of that life. We should have missed the utterances of the Christ that have made glad with their music the weary centuries that have passed since He died. We should no more be able to say to the person soon to pass through the pearly gates, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you." We should have lost the words of Jesus. And how much poorer life would be without the parable of the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan! We should have lost, also, the story of those wonderful deeds that He wrought. I heard the wind yesterday howl as though it possessed all power. But Jesus Christ said one day, "Be quiet," and the wind suddenly hushed. I have been on the middle of the Atlantic when the captain

said, "Get below; nobody allowed on the deck." But Jesus Christ said one night to the angry water, "Be still," and it was quiet. A fool philosophy calling itself a religion says there is no sickness, but Jesus Christ said to deafness, "Listen"; to the dumb, "Speak"; to the leper, "Be clean"; to the fever-stricken, "Be cool and still"; and to the dead, "Live."

And so we should have lost all that record but for the life of Jesus between the incarnation and the crucifixion. Ah, but we should have lost something else. I do not know many things more dear or valuable or serviceable to me than to move along this highway of life and suddenly strike some boulder I had not before seen, and then have dart through the soul the consciousness, "Mine is not the first foot that struck that, for it once bruised the foot of Jesus Christ, who in all our afflictions was afflicted." And sometimes when I have listened to the muttering of a hostile word, or the untruthful discourse of some false friend turned foe, and when a threatening has been wafted in the air to me, I have thought, "His way was much rougher and darker than mine. But He lived it, and so can I. And as He walked the trail, so will I." This consciousness, that Jesus tasted of the bitter black bread of our daily experience, bowed Himself down to the brackish waters that we sometimes have to drink, and knows what sore temptations mean, for He has felt the same—this consciousness is my heartening and my stay. You see we should have lost all that were it not for the life of the Son of God between Bethlehem and Golgotha.

Yes, and I come to where the water is deeper yet, how that we are saved by the life of Jesus that was lived after the resurrection and prior to the ascension. I met a minister during the last week who was unsure of the resurrec-

tion of Christ, and I told him to look carefully where he was going. And because I thought he might heed an English poet, rather than an evangelist of the Bible, I told him how Matthew Arnold very beautifully but very destructively said this of Christ:

"He is dead; far hence He lies
In a lorn Syrian town;
And on His grave with shining eyes
The Syrian stars look down."

Is that so? He is dead, and done with? Now hear Matthew Arnold, the same writer, tell what his life is without the Lord:

"The world which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams
Hath really neither hope, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor balm for pain;
But we are left as on a darkening plain,
Filled with confused alarms of struggle and blight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

That is the life of a man who does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now turn from Arnold to Paul, and what does Paul tell us? "If Christ be not raised, the dead are perished." Then your mother and my father are gone forever more. And all the gifted and the saintly shall forever blow about with the desert dust or be forever sealed within the iron hills—dead, as so many horses are dead on Belgium's bloody battleground.

But he goes on, does this apostle, and says, "You are yet in your sins, if Christ be not risen." You thought you had escaped from them, but it was all delusion. You sat down under the palm trees by the sparkling waters only to find out that the whole thing was a mirage. Moreover,

he says, "If Christ be not raised, I am a perjurer. I have belied God, for I have said God raised up Christ, whom He raised not up, if there be no resurrection from the dead." While I should be sorry to know that those whom I have loved long since and lost a while are gone forever, and while I should be sorry to know that we are yet in our sins, yet sometimes it seems to me the third thing I have mentioned would be regretted more than any other; for you see I have given all my life to the proclamation of this Gospel, and I have nothing else but the ministry I have wrought in the name of my God. Money has not come my way, nor did I want it; possessions have not come to me, nor do I desire them; fame has not come to me, nor do I prize it; I have nothing but decade after decade consumed in the one task of telling everywhere the story of Jesus Christ. And if He is dead, I wish to God I were dead too—that is all. It is high time for me to die, and not longer live to proclaim a lie.

And so do you see how we are saved by that life after the resurrection and until the ascension. How do I know that death has no hurting power? Because it failed to hurt Christ. He rose. How do I know that they passed through that Valley unscathed? Because Christ did. How do I know there is recognition beyond the mist and the mystery? Because Christ rose from the dead, and He knew the people and the people knew Him. Ah, no! if ever this body lies cold and still in front of this pulpit, do not sing ribald nonsense about "beautiful isle of somewhere." I shall not have gone hunting for a "beautiful isle of somewhere." I shall have gone to Jesus Christ's heaven. How do I know it? Because He rose from the grave and He came out. And here I think is the most charming thing of all. He came out the same Jesus, loving Peter just

the same, loving Mary just the same—the same Jesus. I do not want Him to change. I want to have the Jesus who died for me on the cross, and has companioned with me all these years; I want that Jesus. And if I were unsure of finding that same Jesus, I would not much care where I went.

Then we are saved by the present life of Jesus Christ. I am more and more astonished at the uncertainty of good people. I fail to understand why, with a Bible like this in our possession, we are not sure of positive statements, affirmations and clear-cut definitions and a certain faith. I remember how that last one from our church to go into the visible presence of Jesus Christ looked at me when I said "Well, you know where you are going." She agreed to that; and when I suggested that if she should happen to meet in that multitudinous throng anybody whose thought still lingered in the world long enough to be associated with me she might convey the information that I was far along the road myself and had a keen anticipation some day of joining the choir invisible, of those the immortal dead who live again in the visible splendor of God, I recall how almost with a surprised look she smiled into my face. But why should not a man believe that? Why should not that be true? Do you not remember the old dying Welsh preacher comforting his wife when she said, "John, do you think we will know each other in heaven?" by replying, "Have we not known each other on the earth? Are we going to have less sense in glory?"

Ah! when Sir Oliver Lodge talks his moonshine, and Sir Conan Doyle tells us there is booze and tobacco there, and when some short-haired, goggle-eyed woman reads the future for fifty cents by looking into a bit of glass, I like to turn away from all that stupidity and companion with

Jesus Christ after His resurrection and before His ascension, and find out something real about the after life, when death has done the little it can do to my body. We are saved by His life.

And I trust you know this morning what it is to be saved by His possessed life. I tell you my friends there is nothing else that will keep a man year after year in the midst of all these swift eddies—there is nothing that will keep him steady but the possessed life of Jesus Christ. Down here in the clubs they talk about their altruistic plans and motives. But no altruistic motive will hold you steady to the true, persistent, highest life. And they talk about humanitarianism, but I tell you plainly that nothing will keep you all the time, in all circumstances living the highest possible life, but to live it under the consciousness that the same quality of life that was in Jesus is in you. So we are saved by the possessed life of Jesus Christ. Oh, if there is anybody who ought to know that, it is I, for this is my twenty-fifth speech since only last Sunday morning week—and I have been doing this all my life, being shot all to pieces physically, yet taking up the burden and saying, "Jesus Christ, you gave me that burden, and you will now help me bear it"; taking up the sword and marching out onto the field, limping, yet ever saying, "Christ, you said no weapon formed against me can prosper, and you will now keep your word with me." And I tell you He has not failed, nor has He ever wavered in his love. But if the whole world went over to Christian Science or occultism of any kind, or into the other negations of those who have no anchorage in faith, why—

"Stand thou on that side,
And on this side, I."

I know whom I have believed; I know who helped me when the heavens grew black and the winds were rough; I have summered and wintered with Jesus Christ; and it is too late in the day for you to suggest to me that He is only a man, dying to set a good example, and passing away as one of his critics said, "a pale-faced, bright-eyed Judean peasant."

"Very God of very God" runs the old creed, and to it I subscribe. Great is the mystery of godliness, but it was God manifest in the flesh who saved me from my sins. And in that faith I purpose finishing my life. And in that faith I purpose lying down to die; or, never doing that, in that faith I will rise up to meet Him in the air, if I am alive at His appearing.

VI

AT PATMOS—IN THE SPIRIT

*“I * * * was in the isle that is called Patmos * * * I was in the Spirit.”*—Revelation 1:9, 10.

I WAS exiled on Patmos' lonely isle; around me the heaving restless sea, about me the screaming wild birds, and over me the pitiless glare. But I was in the Spirit, and I saw far into heaven, and had a vision of what the world will be when the years have died away. And I heard the harpers harping on their golden harps, and I saw the victorious armies of the Lamb, and I walked by the sea of glass that burns like flame, and I saw the face of Jesus Christ.

Now what I want to show you is this: that to be in Patmos in the Spirit is the common experience of life, and has about it nothing exceptional at all. And because I knew you would not receive that statement on my poor utterance, I have called to my aid men who knew, and men whose utterances have in them the thunder of authority.

Moses says: I was in Midian, ostracized from Egypt, far from my kith and kin, tending sheep, and all around me the waste of the wilderness. But I saw a bush and it burned and was never burned out, and amazed at the constancy of the flame I drew near, and from the heart of the fire I heard a voice saying, “Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” And I was commanded to go and smite Pharaoh, and topple into the dust the throne of Egypt, and deliver

God's ancient people from their servitude. I was in the isle called Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

Let Abraham speak: I was called out from the land of my fathers, from the old familiar places, from the home of my childhood; and I was bidden go out in ignorance and uncertainty; and I went and became God's great vagrant, living in a tent, and owning no foot of ground in which to even bury my dead. But under the shining stars I moved, bearing two titles that have been the wonder of ages, for I was the "Friend of God," and the "Father of all the Faithful." I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

Let Job speak: I lost all my possessions, and I lost my children, and I lost my wife when she lost her faith in God, and I was tortured in body and tormented in mind and devil assailed. But in the heart of it all I knew my God, my Avenger, my Redeemer lived, and I was sustained with the hope of the coming one and luminous "afterward." I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

Let David speak: I was assailed by Goliath when only a boy, satirized by my brethren according to the flesh, hunted by King Saul like a partridge on the mountain, and had to simulate madness to escape with my life. But I saw the twenty-third psalm, and I wandered down by the still waters, and was led into the green pastures, and goodness and mercy have followed me every day of my life. I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

Let the three Hebrews speak: We were ordered to forsake God and bow down to an idol, and when we refused, the alternative was presented of doing as the king commanded, or being hurled into a flaming furnace, and we were cast into a fire so hot that it slew the very men who flung us therein. But we walked in the flames unscathed as the men walk in the summer air; and as we walked, we

talked with the great King of Saints, even the Son of man. We were in Patmos, but we were in the Spirit!

Let Daniel speak: I served as a politician, and because I would fain rise beyond the politician and be God's statesman, they set spies on my trail and bade me abandon my prayerfulness and faith. But I opened my window towards God's city and I prayed; and when foes reported my act of disloyalty to the gods of my day, I was flung down into a den where roamed the lions, but God was with me and the most wonderful story I ever told was the story of the lions' den. I was in Patmos, but in the Spirit!

Let John the Baptist speak: I was a lonely man, and I had few friends as I walked by the Jordan and thundered my message of repentance; and then I retreated into the silence as the darkness dropped, and refreshed my soul by communion with the God of the universe and the God of eternity; and very soon I found my way into a jail, and I knew the doors that closed behind me would never open for my exit. But when I sent out my disciples to ask a question of the Christ, they came back and gave me the answer; but they gave me more, for they said, "He stood, that marvelous One, and He said, Among those born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

Let Simon Peter speak: I too went to jail, and they fastened me to soldiers the night before my execution, and I was doomed to die. But a light shone, and the angel appeared, and the fetters fell off, and the jail doors opened, and I walked out unafraid. I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

Let Paul speak: Scarred are my shoulders, for the scourge was heavy and a strong man lifted it, and these scars are scars where the stones cut, and I am bowed over

with weariness and tormented with pain. But in the jail I sang till the earthquake struck the place, and on the stormy sea there stood by me the angel of the Lord whose I am and whom I serve. I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

Ah, but they are all dead! Yes. Yet Whittier said:

“I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear with groan and travail cries
The world confess its sin.
Yet mid the maddening maze of things,
All tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings,
I know that God is good.”

I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

But Whittier was of the East, and we are of the West. In Chicago lived a lawyer who loved his God, but who was sorely tried by the devil as was Job in an olden time. And his wife and two daughters started for the other side of the Atlantic while he sought to gather together the remains of a broken fortune and business. Then one day he received a cablegram from his wife, “Saved alone.” In the wreck the two daughters went down to where they await the voice that will make the sea give up its dead. And then he sat down and wrote—

“When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea-billows roll,
Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say,
‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’”

And Spafford of Chicago says, I was in Patmos, but I was in the Spirit!

But we are here. Surely we are. And I am here to say I know Patmos; I know what it is to say no man cares for

my soul; I know what it is to go out into the lonely places and wrestle with the king of the pit; I know all about Patmos, but I recall Patmos with sincere joy, for there I receive the richest unveilings of God's glory. And now what about you? Do you remember the evening when the sun went down and the wind began to moan? Ah, but do you recall the stars that shone? Do you remember when the hot breath of the foe-man was on your cheek? But do you remember how you happened to look to your right and there stood the Galilean? And so I say—and no man in the house can contradict me—to be in Patmos in the Spirit is a calm every-day experience of the children of God.

For when the soul is rightly adjusted Godward, Patmos becomes the place of marvelous melody and glorious vision. I want to say a word about this beautiful world this morning. It got into my blood as I came over. What a world it is! What skies are above us! When I consider them I hear voices, not speaking in Hebrew or Greek or English, but speaking in the universal language of symbolism and sign, and they proclaim the unerring wisdom and the resistless power and the marvelous benevolence of God. And when I look at the mountains, purple-breasted, snowy-crested, age-long and permanent, they remind me of the righteousness of the Eternal. And when I behold the clouds, those great bulking navies of the upper seas, I seem to see the clouds as the dust of His feet. And when I hear the wind whisper among the trees, gently moving in the garden so that the bells of the wild current distill their music, and then, roaring about the mountain top and thundering over the seas, I seem to see God riding on the wings of the wind. And so the whole world becomes the palace of the imminent God where His beauty is about me, and His mercy

and His love. And then I know the Holy Land is not far away over the seas, but the Holy Land is here; and Moses' burning bush is here; and the little flowers that tell of a God who robed them more gloriously than Solomon was ever adorned, grow in the Oregon woods. And the imminency of God sweeps over me like a mighty passion. And Patmos becomes a place of revealing.

Yes, and God is not found alone in the glorious world that lies about us in its dazzling beauty, but also in that other world of man's experience. I see a house so often that I never saw but once. It was far away in the East. The man had been a barkeeper, but he found Christ and became saved. And he went to work digging ditches on a city street for eight dollars a week. Lest you disbelieve me, I must say that was twenty-five years ago before the high cost of living came into existence. And I went down to see him after he was baptized, and I got to his house a little too soon. And I shall thank God forever for the visit I made that evening. The woman— why, I think I never saw anybody smile as she smiled, yet she had been used to being thrashed by the barkeeper. And the children seemed impatient for nothing but for father's return. And I sat in glorified astonishment. And by and by the footfall was heard, common to me like other footfalls, but significant to them. And they were all alert, and the door was flung open and the plain-looking, dirtily clothed man came in to be kissed by the wife, and hugged by the children, and I sat there and cried like a fool. What was it? It was Revelation one. He was in the isle called Patmos, and made eight dollars a week in hard, dirty employment, his hands blistered, and his feet heavy, and his head weary; but he was in Patmos, and in the Spirit!

And that other world—not the one around man, or the

one in which man moves, but the world inside him, what about that? Man, do you remember the night you walked down that aisle and your eyelids were not strong enough to keep the tears back? What made you cry? Because you were being saved by Jesus Christ! You saw hell, I know it; but you saw heaven too. You saw your sin and the devil; but you saw your Saviour Jesus Christ. You were in Patmos; but you were in the Spirit!

I have been up in the hospital, where I heard and felt something strange like the thundering of that angel that moved over the land of Egypt one dark night. And then the weary lids lifted, and the eyes looked out their recognition, and the poor tired lips said, "Repeat that text you so often quote," and I answered—for I know the text—"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And then came a smile seraphic on the faces, and a light that never was on sea or shore, and I knew that room in the ward was the court of the King. In Patmos; but in the Spirit!

And I go weak and limping all this day because of that white flower you wear on this Mother's Day. It is a beautiful custom, but I am always glad when this day is over. For that is Patmos to some of us, is it not? But where has she gone, that mother? Where does she live, that one for whom you say—

"Oh, for the touch of the vanished hand,
The sound of the voice that is still."

Poor Sir Oliver Lodge—at home, I guess, in atoms and science—but what a poor, stupid mortal when he gets to

touching spirits and God. Is she up there somewhere at the beck and call of a man or woman that charges fifty cents for looking just a little more silly than they commonly look, and mumbling incoherencies ungrammatically expressed and maudlin in sentiment? O my God, is that what we have got? Then I would put my foot on every religion. No, this is what we possess: "In my Father's house are many mansions." And there is no connection whatsoever between that mansion into which your mother moved and the dirty attic. And you think God has got nothing better for His blood-bought redeemed children, who are with Jesus Christ, to do but be at the beck and call of Conan Doyle, who despises the atonement by blood, and Sir Oliver Lodge who never knew the Lord Jesus Christ? I do not know where I started out on this sentence, but I know very well where I am coming out, for the white flower tells you of being in the isle called Patmos; but it tells you of the Spirit land, too.

And if the soul is right with God on Patmos, then we see things from God's viewpoint, even as John did. Oh, my fellow men, life is poorly lived until you thus live it. He made his million dollars, did a man who died in this city long ago; yet with his last poor laboring breath he said, "I have lived in vain, and I see it." Contrast that with this. Some kind friend buried him or else he was flung off as a piece of offal, the mighty Paul the Apostle, and yet he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course—I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

There is the difference between living the life on Patmos in the Spirit, and living the life on Patmos apart from the Spirit. For all these things we gaze upon are destined to crumble and fall. They are all going. You labor to ac-

cumulate; but when you lie there in the little box and about you are flowers, your accumulations are all gone. You strive for the applause of your generation, but when they fasten the little lid on that coffin, the applause of your generation is forgotten. You run your giddy round of amusement after amusement, and all you have got is merely of the world and the world passeth away.

Oh, it makes my heart ache to look off at you and think how you have lived long years in vain. You have got a house in this city, but your poor homeless soul has got no home in heaven; you have got treasure down here that a burglar can steal, but you are not rich towards God. Will you not begin to live the life of the man who occupies God's point of vision and who sees things as God sees them? And then when you are banished to some lonely isle of Patmos, you will see heaven open and view the streets of gold and the thrones.

This is the life Christ died to give you, and living this life, you will be able to say to every Goliath of Gath, "You come against me with a great spear and sword, but I come against you in the name of the Lord God"—and David is then stronger than Goliath. Living this life, you will stand beside Luther as he says, "You tell me Duke George is against me? Well, if it rained Duke Georges for two weeks, I would go! You tell me there are devil-possessed men seeking my hurt. If there were as many devils in that city as tiles on the house-roof, I would go. Here I stand. God help me. I cannot do otherwise."

Living this life, you will rejoice in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh experience, and experience, hope. Living this life, you will see things from God's viewpoint. But you will never do this, in spite of all they are telling you in these restless days, you will never do it until you

accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and your God, for there is no other way.

Oh, you can camouflage yourself with Christian Science now, but I tell you it will stand you in no stead in the great day when God reveals the secrets in the hearts of men, and men are saved or damned by virtue of their relationship to Christ His Son, even the Lord Jesus. You look at me as though you were now in the isle of Patmos, so many of you. I suppose I have stirred some depths in your experience, or you have recalled some point of disaster in your experience.

Oh, men and women, just let God put you in the Spirit, and then He will paint a rainbow on the dun clouds of your life, He will take the tears of disappointment, and the heart-ache and loss, and He will so transform and transfigure them that you will be saved by hope, and the hope will be painted on the black clouds that formerly spoke to you of despair.

Come to this God by the alone way, Jesus Christ. Get rightly adjusted to Him. Then all the jarring notes of life will turn into a beautiful psalm; and all the strife of the world will be nothing but the tuning of the instruments by the great God, so that by and by there shall burst upon your astonished ear the strains of the Hallelujah Chorus of the Eternal. Will you not come to Him?

Oh, come to this God who turns Patmos into the place of revelation, and come to Him through Jesus Christ!

VII

A CHRISTIAN DUTY

"If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—Galatians 6:1.

BUT a man in the Christian church of Galatia will not be overtaken in a fault! For has he not been made a partaker of the divine nature, and has there not been implanted in him the incorruptible Word? Then how vain to talk about such an one being overtaken in a fault. But as you recall the Old Testament and picture the great men of God who are mentioned therein, you find some reason for this caution addressed by Paul to the Galatian church, for Adam in innocency was overtaken in a fault; and Noah, having experienced the flood, was overtaken in a fault; and Abraham, the Friend of God, was overtaken in a fault; and David, the sweet singer of Israel, was overtaken in a fault. And when you enter the pages of the New Testament, the experience is the same. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" said the Lord Jesus to Simon Peter. "Places on Thy right hand and on Thy left," was the joint request of John and James, in unholy ambition. "I will not believe unless I put my finger in the print of the nail," said unbelieving Thomas. And "They all forsook Him and fled," is the dreary record of the disciples forsaking Christ.

And we should remember that we are molested and menaced by a trinity of evil, for the world, that was too

much for Demas, of whom Paul said, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," still attracts; and the flesh that pulled David down off the height of aspiration into the gloomy slime of sin, still threatens; and the devil who hindered the Apostle Paul and sifted Simon and withstood Christ Himself, is still in evidence. Now how much Satan knows of God's redemptive plan is not mine to state. Or how much he knows of God's election in grace, I am unprepared to say; but I do know from the reading of Scripture that he loves to thwart the high purposes of God, and is never more energetic than in seeking to pull down that which Jesus Christ seeks to build up. And they whose experience is deepest in grace are the people who most sedulously war against the wiles of the devil. And may it not be true that those who think least of the temptations of the pit are those offering the least resistance to the king of hell.

May I venture to tell of a negro down South who was approached by his master and asked to explain how it was that the negro Christian was always pestered by Satan, while, said the atheist master, "the devil never worries me at all." They were out hunting, as I recall the story. And the master's gun brought down some ducks, some dead and one only wounded. And when he asked the negro to get the ducks, the negro replied, "Shall I go for the dead ones?" Said the master, "No, for the duck seeking to get away!" And when the behest of the master had been obeyed, the negro said, "I think I have the answer to your question as to why Satan never bothers you, for you are the dead duck and he is very sure of you; but I am the wounded duck and I am trying to get away, and therefore his energies are directed towards my capture and not toward yours." There may be a philosophy in the simple

story, and the philosophy may become a self-accusing philosophy, if we apply it to our own lives, for we must remember that while we have the treasures of God, we have it in earthen vessels.

"Call no man happy until he is dead," said one of antiquity, "for you know not what changes may come to him." And if you have not been overtaken in a fault, remember the fault is still on your trail and you are not safe yet. And perhaps the particular fault that will most seriously assail your soul has not yet found opportunity to present itself; and in the unknown future an enemy, whom you may find it very hard to resist, may spring from his hiding place. A man may be overtaken in a fault.

What shall be done with such a man, and how shall we behave toward him? Well, we must differentiate between the man who is overtaken in a fault, and the man who overtakes the fault; and perhaps we had better differentiate between those two by making each concrete through an illustration. Judas plotted day after day against Jesus, and days before the crucifixion he made arrangements with the enemies of the Lord whereby the crucifixion could be brought about, so that Judas was not so much overtaken by a fault following after him day after day, and catching him at last off guard, as he was the person who overtook the fault, sought it out, hunted it down, and gave himself no rest until he had reached it. That is one thing; but the text means the opposite. Here is the man, and the fault seeks to overtake him. With deadly persistency it follows, while the man may be seeking to escape, or he may be unaware of his peril. At last, as in sudden squall, he becomes the victim of a fault. That is the one Paul is talking about. Toward such a one he says, "Ye who are spiritual, seek his restoration." This does not negative the

discipline of the church, for you will find this same Apostle bidding churches examine their members, and where a church member has failed to have participation in Christ's grace, that unfruitful member is to be removed. And in that discipline of the church the Apostle had the holiest precedent of all, where Jesus said of one who would not be won back into allegiance, "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." But how are we to behave to the heathen man and the publican? Go ye into all the world, said the Master, and to the heathen man and the publican preach the gospel of salvation and of restoration. And so you see the text harmonizes with the teaching of Jesus. For if any man be overtaken in a fault, seek his restoration. This word "restore" has a great fascination for me.

When preaching in a large city I visited a doctor whose specialty was treating the eyes. One day when I entered his office I found the doctor jubilant, and or ever I could accost him, he said, "I am very happy." I said, "Share your joy with me." He said, "Did you meet an elderly man going out from the office? That man has not seen a flower nor the face of his child for a long, long time. He lived away in the country. He came into town and sought my advice. I told him I thought sight could be restored to him. I performed the final operation this morning, and shading his eyes I showed that man the glory of the morning. I restored his vision." It must be a beautiful and blessed thing to restore sight; but what is that to restoring a soul?

If any man be overtaken in a fault, restore him. Pick him up, bring him back from the far off country to the Father's house. Restore him! Take from him the rags and put on him the robe; bind up his bruised feet and

place on him the shoes; wash the filth from his flesh, and adorn him with the fine raiment and the ring; and hear the Father say over him, "This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Restore him, the man overtaken in a fault! Will you hear James concerning this matter as he says, "If one convert a sinner from the error of his way, know these two things, a soul has been saved from death and a multitude of sins prevented." Surely towards this double goal of preventing sin and saving a soul, we are urged to seek the restoration of the man who has been overtaken in a fault.

But the text mentions another significant fact. "Ye who are spiritual, restore such an one." Is there not something repellent about that? Is not the ordinary conception somewhat like this, the spiritual man will be the man severe on sin, and the fleckless man will most bitterly reproach the soiled soul? But I wonder if we are talking about the real thing or its caricature. I have read in a book I love to study of the perfect One who was spiritual indeed; and I find all sorts of people flocked about Him, those whose guilt was deep, and those whose sins were loathsome and numerous; and from what I have learned of that great One, were He upon the earth today I would rather go to Him when overtaken in a fault than to anybody else in God's universe. Ah, the Pharisaic, who have only a camouflaged religion, are sinners; and God prevent any man overtaken in a fault from falling into their hands and suffering their judgment. But the spiritual, well, you see the spiritual are like Jesus, and Jesus was more tender than a mother. "The bruised reed shall He not break," the prophet said of Him; and the other half of that sentence transposed into modern speech would be this, "And the dimly burning wick He will not put out." "Ye who are spiritual, restore such an one."

Upon Robert Browning's statement that he needs sensitive finger tips who touches souls, let me build this fact. When a man is overtaken in a fault he needs more than at any other time in his life the tender treatment that is only ministered by a spiritual man. He wants no Sinai, for he has got Sinai inside him. He wants no talk about perdition then, when hell is blistering his poor heart. No time is that for reproach; that is the time for sympathy, comfort, and consolation. "Ye who are spiritual, restore such an one."

I thought as I studied this text we ought to have a new department of effort in our church. We ought to pick out three men and three women conspicuous for spirituality, tenderness, graciousness, who are gentle of voice, almost noiseless in movement, and who have been cultured in the school of Jesus Christ; and unto those six spiritual people we should commit the man overtaken in a fault. But where are the six, and who would dare nominate himself as a member of that committee? I will venture to say one thing about such a committee. It must be made up of men and women whose ears are close to Christ's mouth, and whose hearts beat true to Christ's heart, and who know how to weep as Christ wept, and who have fellowship with Him in his sufferings.

And they, the spiritual, are to do this restoring in the spirit of meekness. Who is there among us who possesses meekness? Sometimes I think it is the last of the Christian graces to come into our possession. Meekness! Oh, you must never approach this overtaken man in a spirit of arrogance! There must never be engendered the atmosphere of Phariseeism that says, "I am unfallen, and therefore holier than thou." And from whom do we get meekness? From Jesus. The world knows nothing about it, and cares nothing for it, and will have none of it. Did

not Aristotle say, "Meekness is a meanness bordering on a vice"? And so the meek man is a disreputable man, according to the thinking of Aristotle. And where do we get meekness. "Let him learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; I am the meek one," says Jesus. Oh, I am tempted to say that meekness goes along with the robust virtues of the soul. For who is courageous as Jesus; and who is forceful as Jesus; and who more stern than Jesus when sternness was required. And yet He imparts the meekness with which the spiritual are to seek the restoration of the man overtaken in a fault. And, my friends, there are so many things that ought to make us meek, that I am embarrassed and know not which two or three to mention. Be meek, because perhaps the very sin that has overtaken your brother overtook you ten years ago. Remember that now as you approach him. Tell him you fell into that pit, but from it you were extricated by the great Shepherd of your soul. Be meek.

Then remember how different are your circumstances to the environment that beset him. I wonder very often about my detestation of the Turk, but I do hate him and it is no use denying it. But had I been born under his flag, should I have been very dissimilar to him I wonder? The temptation that overtook that fallen friend is one that could never overtake you in your different circumstances.

I always smile when I remember what a volley of artillery was directed my way in a ministerial association once when we were discussing socialism. The hard times were upon us and people were suffering, and I knew homes where little children went hungry to bed and cried themselves to sleep. And I said in that meeting, "Let us have a little tenderness toward these people. I know we are discussing a man who stole some bread for his hungry

child; yet I wish to say it is my private belief that under similar circumstances I should do the same thing myself." And they admonished me most decidedly and emphatically. But what I should do in his place is often suggested by what he does in his place. For "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

I hope I should not steal under any circumstances; still, I am not a bit sure but if my little grandchild were dying of starvation, I might steal if I could not prolong that child's life in any other way. God forgive me, if I am wrong, and God grant that I may never be overtaken by that particular fault, for I believe I should fall in the hands of it. But I say we should remember to be meek, as we remember we have not yet been in his circumstances.

"What's done we partly may compute,
But we know not what's resisted."

And we should remember to be meek because after all, who maketh thee to differ? "But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford," said the preacher, when he saw the man going to execution. And you men, what sort of characters would you be today but for the grace of God? They are behind the bars who were no weaker than you, only you have been kept by His grace. So remember these things and be very meek when you attempt to restore those overtaken by evil.

"Considering thyself." Why that is a strange word! We thought it would be. Consider the world that will revel in the discomfiture of that man and gloat over his shame. I do not think God bids us do very many things with a regard towards the world. And I thought it might read, Consider his friends. And well it might be. There is a letter in my study that I do not like to look at; it is the

letter of a mother about her son who was overtaken in a fault. There are tears on the paper, and sometimes I think there is blood on it too. Yet the text does not say, Consider his friends. Nor does it say, Consider the church, the church that will be humiliated and shamed by this fallen member—not though an Ingersoll risen from hell would do this church less hurt than one of you men falling from grace would do it. It does not say, Consider himself. There he lies, the poor, shamed prodigal, bloodshot eyes, disheveled, dirty, shamed. No! But surely it will say, Consider Christ who grieves and is hurt again. No, not Christ even. It says, "Consider thyself." It says that in Galatians six, one. "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"; and then, being overtaken by the fault, you will need rescue from someone else, so do you impart it now. And may I be forgiven if I say I think there is a more subtle suggestion yet.

Perhaps the temptation that may trip you presents itself in the form of your fallen brother and your attitude toward him, even the temptation of Phariseeism in your conduct towards someone who trips, and Phariseeism of soul reveals itself then and there as at no other time. Do you remember with what lordly disdain you treated someone who had fallen from grace, as you phrased it? My friend, I would rather be the man who fell from grace, than be you. Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself. "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, that publican, for instance." And the publican, Jesus says, went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee, because, said the sublime Teacher, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased."

Let me tell you a story from the Arabic. Two men

when it came time to pray, spread the mat and knelt down. The men were brothers. And one of them fell asleep; and the one praying said, "Gabriel, look at me, in the heat of the day I am praying, while my brother has fallen asleep." And Gabriel answered, "My friend, it were better for you to be asleep than to be awake to cast reproaches at your brother." Do you begin to see what this wonderful text means? "Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Do you know where I closed my meditation concerning this sermon? It is where I am going to close the sermon. I said, Jesus, if this is your order to me, if I am to seek the restoration of the man overtaken in a fault, how will You behave? I recoiled a little from the seeming impertinence of the question. But then I was comforted by the happy look on His face as He said, "I am willing to abide by your question and face the text. When were you ever overtaken by a fault but I sought your restoration? I am only asking you to do in a little way what I am willing to do in a large way."

Do you remember how a man went to Him with great pride in his heart and said, "Lord, my brother has committed the same sin against me seven times. What a saint I am. Do you not think it is about time to begin some other kind of treatment?" But Christ said, "You have forgiven your brother seven times, have you? Well, that is a good commencement; but now forgive him four hundred and ninety times, seventy times seven." And then Christ smiled at me again as He said, "If I am prepared to go that length in advising you to forgive your brother four hundred and ninety times, how many times do you think I, the living Lord, will forgive you?" And I was feeling a little weary when I first began to question Jesus;

but you know when He put those figures up on the black-board in front of me, seven and seventy times seven, and then—poor arithmetician that I am—I found He meant four hundred and ninety times, I said, "My God, you will forgive me indefinitely, and infinitely, and eternally." So that is where I arrived in my study of the text.

If any man here is overtaken in a fault, Jesus Christ the spiritual, who of Himself said, "I am meek," awaits to restore you. My brother He does not want you damned, He wants you saved. He has no kick for you when you are down; He has a kiss of restoration and pardon. He does not come to you with Sinai but Calvary. He does not hold you over the pit, but dies for you on the bloody cross.

I have learned to distrust many things and many people in the world; but I tell you I would trust Christ with my poor torn bruised bleeding soul, for He is tenderness incarnate. Come to Him, and He will make you happy, peaceful, sure, safe, and befriend you in time and in eternity. Come to Him, and come now!

VIII

YOUR BUILDING

*“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man build on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, hay, wood, stubble; every man’s work shall be made plain; for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire shall prove every man’s work, of what sort it is. If any man’s work shall abide which he built on the foundation, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved as by fire.”—
1 Corinthians 3:11-15.*

THERE is nothing in the whole Word of God that has entered into my life and is more ever-present in my thinking and abiding in its influence, than the somewhat long passage of Scripture which I have just read. I think I shall discover some day, that greater than anything else as a factor in my life has been this judgment parable of the Apostle Paul. And there are three things in it that I wish I could write on your eyeballs, where you might always see them, and in your hearts, where you might always feel them.

The first thing is this; it comes out of the context: That the personality of a preacher colors his preaching and affects the people to whom he preaches. The personality of the teachers colors the teaching, for Paul says: “I preached to you Corinthian people, and then Apollos, another preacher, came and preached to you; and, whether we preached the same truth or not, the fact remains that

you are split up into sections, so that some of you are saying, 'I belong to Paul,' while others are saying, 'I belong to Apollos.'" Now, whether these two men could have changed their different modes of presenting truth, I am not now discussing, but I am only calling your attention to the fact that the personality of the preacher affects the preaching.

If you take the four gospels, written, as the early Christian confessors used to say, by four men, of whom the first Matthew, stood for a lion; the second, Mark, for an ox; the third, Luke, for a man; and the fourth, John, for an eagle, you can easily see as you judge these four gospels while you read them, that Matthew has an altogether different way of presenting his story of Jesus to Mark's way; and Luke is entirely different in his mode of teaching to John; and so of the four men who taught concerning the earthly life of Jesus, showing how the personality of the writer of the gospel colored the content of the gospel.

And what I am now saying is true of the entire Bible. There is a difference between the writing of Moses in Genesis and the writing of Ezekiel in his prophecy. Indeed, they are altogether unlike. And there is an equal difference between the writings of David in the Psalms and his son Solomon in the Proverbs. And so you find while God communicated the truth through various speakers and writers, the personality of those men gave various characteristics to the teaching.

Now the same is true today. Take the late Alexander Maclaren's audience in England, that listened to him for thirty or forty years—how could a man appear in that pulpit to confront those men and women and behave like some painted fool at a circus? The reception that would be given his first joke, the shock that would smite him as

he uttered his first foolishness, would go to prove the thing I am talking about, that the personality of Alexander Mac-laren had so affected that audience that it simply could not and would not listen to some comedian pretending to be a preacher of the Word.

Granting that this fact is so,—and so it is,—that the personality of the preacher does affect the audience, how dreadful it must be for an audience of saved, sanctified men and women to be compelled to listen to a peanut man in the pulpit. Indeed it is true that such an audience will not listen to the person I, purposely and in contempt, call the peanut preacher. And I believe the time is ripe for Christian people to rebuke that sort of thing and, further, to follow up their rebuke by removing their presence from men in the pulpit who will not preach the gospel of Jesus Christ or abide by the testimony of the Book. I think such people must do one of two things: They must lose their own spiritual life to a very large extent, or else they must, by the fact of their continuance in that ministry, minimize their testimony for the truth.

Oh, how audiences ought to pray that God would send them men who know Christ and are true to Him, and have no Master but Christ and own no authority but His. But, instead of that, it is the manipulation of a lot of secretaries and the utterances of personal friends of candidates and the putting forth of claims actually inimical to the gospel of Jesus that are successful today in filling two-thirds of the pulpits of the land. Why, in this city, a little lad approached a church door one night and said, "Mister, is the curtain up yet?" Such a reputation had that church obtained for foolishness and cheap theatricals that the boy in his innocence regarded it as a kind of theatrical performance—which indeed it was.

Now, then, having admitted and asserted that the personality of the preacher affects the pew, let me turn around to what I trust will be equally interesting to you people, and assert that the personality of the pew affects the preacher. For a man cannot long companion—with the close relationship as pastor and people—with peanut men and women without consciously or unconsciously losing his old-time vigor and straightforwardness and manliness and fidelity and spiritual vision. And so, very largely, an audience makes a minister. Do you know that you could sit there this morning and simply chill and freeze a comedian preacher into absolute embarrassment; or, on the other hand, you could receive his jocularity and tomfoolery with such avidity that you would encourage him to go a little bit further than he went before.

And so an audience affects the speaker. It is a hard thing, as in the past I have found, to go on preaching Christ's evangel to people who are cynical and mercenary and cold-blooded and icy in emotion and self-congratulatory and mean and hypocritical and unregenerated. It is a terrible task. Indeed I think the task is harder than any other that God sets before men—to withstand the impact of all that sort of thing and still unflinchingly and intensely and rigidly and unfalteringly hold forth the Word of Life. The preacher may well pray God that his people might become such as would call for the truth, the truth delivered consciously, clearly, straightforwardly, without fear of all hells and earths, and with one objective alone, even the commendation and glory of Jesus Christ.

The second thing that I always see in this parable, and shall see till I die, is this law of Christian judgment. The foundation is one—Jesus Christ. No preacher has to lay

that in the sense of originating it. He needs only to state it. Jesus Christ is the foundation. Now I would not take Paul's word for it with half the enthusiasm that I do take it were it not that back of Paul stands Jesus. For Jesus says, "I am the foundation." Oh, I have often thought how, after He had spoken of many things in His Sermon on the Mount, He came to the close, and, in a way that must put Unitarianism to the blush, he distinctly said, "Whosoever heareth my words and doeth them, is like a man building his house on the rock, and the rain may descend, the wind blow, and the rivers rush, but that house will stand." Why? Because it is on the rock. And "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, is like a man building his house on the sand, and when the rain and wind and river work their will on that house, it is gone." Why? Because it was a poor house? No, because it was built on sand!

Now, what is sand? According to Jesus, it is everything in the world except His Word. That is what He says—and I never defend Jesus, I only quote Him. He says, "A house cannot fall that is built on Me." And with equal clearness He says, "A house cannot stand that is not built on Me." In what I sometimes think is the deepest thing that ever left my Lord's lips He further emphasizes this fact, that He is the foundation. For He says, "He that believeth on the Son hath life"—and that is consoling to those who do believe. But what about all others? "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him"—a most terrific statement. Sharper than a two-edged sword it is, going into the heart and the very marrow of the bone as it distinctly asserts that the believer in Christ alone has life, and that any other, whatever his characteristics, if he does not believe

in Jesus has not the life that emanates from the Son of God. John so understood Jesus, for in his epistle he said, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son shall not see life"—an echo, you see, of the utterance of Jesus Christ.

Now, people, gathered here this morning in these numbers, and gathered in order that you may sit there and seriously consider this question, Am I on the foundation?—oh, I know you are members of the church, but membership in a church never kept anybody out of hell—are you on the foundation? I have heard, and so have you, of people who at the last, after twenty, thirty, forty years of church membership, have suddenly discovered to their discomfiture that they have been resting on something other than the finished work of Jesus Christ, and in dismay of the past have turned to the Saviour they never before possessed. You deacons, Sunday-school teachers, you men and women who may have hardly given this matter a thought for long years, as you sit there in the light of this Scripture shot through by the Spirit of God, ask yourself this question; Am I on that foundation? Because I find that the people on this foundation are the people who say with the psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." You see these people on the foundation just smile at all those things, and say, "What do we care? Have we not Jesus' own word, 'The rain may come and the wind may blow and the floods dash, but no house ever falls that is built on Me.' " Are you really on the foundation? Are you on it? Well, then, thank God for it!

Now we come to our study. What have you built, what are you building on that foundation? The moment you consciously accepted Christ and stepped out on to that foundation you were saved. And I have nearly said that it is a pity some of you had not gone to heaven then! But I am not sure I know any in the church of which that is true, though I know many outside this church of whom it might be said. What have you built on that foundation?

There is the thief dying on the cross, but he looks at Jesus and believes on Him, and his poor crucified feet find the foundation, and he is saved. But suppose God works a miracle and gives him a year of life in Jerusalem —ah, that changes everything! How is he going to build on that foundation? The question is important because the condition of reward is the life you have lived. That is not the condition of salvation, but it is the condition of reward. Thus you see a man may be a believer in Christ Jesus and never build anything worth while on that foundation.

So ask yourself again, What sort of house have I built on that foundation since I was saved? Last week I asked myself that question over and over. I went back until I touched that June night when I stepped on to the foundation, and almost in agony I cried out to God, "Save me from seeing my life go up in smoke"; for I could imagine nothing more terrible than having my life since I stepped upon the foundation destroyed. I wish you young people would ponder that, for it would do you a great deal of good to realize that, next to the loss of a soul, is the loss of life. I have sometimes wondered whether there is much heaven in store for me if I have lost my life. This being saved as by fire meets with no response in my soul. I do not want that. I do not want to go into heaven nothing but

a saved soul, with a lost life, lost influence, lost example, lost everything but my soul; but I want, by the help of God, to have such an edifice built on that foundation as will glorify the One who died for me.

And now one other thing: I may be saved as a believer, but be condemned as a builder. Paul says so. Just keep on asking questions this morning. How much of your life that you have lived since you first believed in Jesus will endure in the test of God's fire? How much will endure? You have built a house, but that may go; you have built a reputation, but that may go too, for God is not going to judge you by what folks thought about you, but He is going to judge you by His knowledge of you. Yes, you may be a minister; but I want to tell you, out of my own experience, that you may preach a sermon from a wrong motive, and so the very sermon that might have been gold, silver, precious stones becomes nothing but hay, wood, stubble.

Then I hasten to say that you may be saved as a believer and rewarded as a builder. Oh, to see the soul saved, the life saved, the character saved, the example saved, the influence saved, the time saved; to have somebody come with outstretched hands to meet you in heaven and say, "Hallelujah! But for you I should never have been here!" How that will augment the joy of heaven! But how different will be the lot of the person saved as by fire.

Now the last thing I shall say of that parable is this: There is an eternal difference in believers, and that is brought about by the life those believers lived after they got upon the foundation. An eternal difference, for this parable says of a man who on the good foundation has built hay, wood, and stubble—let me give you the exact words—"He shall suffer loss." Let us dare to look that

in the face for a minute. He shall suffer—of course he will suffer, for there are awards or rewards, in heaven, and they are conditioned on service rendered below. And of the saved, some shall receive an abundant entrance, and some shall be saved as by fire—merely saved. Some shall suffer loss, and some shall receive a reward; and that is absolutely righteous.

Let me pick out two members of this church, both saved men, and use them as illustrations. Here is a man present in the Sunday services, Sunday-school, Wednesday-night prayer meeting, business meeting if he has anything to do there; he gives his testimony whenever he can; he helped build this church; he helps maintain this ministry; his money has gone into Mr. Burkett's work over in China, whose glowing messages make my heart glad; and his ministry is from the heart. But the other man, also a member of this church, is not here this morning, and he will not be here tonight, and the Sunday-school knows him not, nor the prayer meeting, and of testimony he has none, of family worship none, of Bible reading none. In no whit would this church lose if that man died today. Now is it not right, and must it not be so if God is righteous, that there is an eternal difference between those two men? It could not be otherwise; it must be so; it is so. The first man shall receive a reward in addition to his salvation. The second man shall suffer loss in spite of his salvation. That is the clear teaching of this wonderful parable of the great apostle.

Let us now turn for a moment to the other side. "He shall receive a reward." What will the reward be? Well, the very first thing that presents itself to me is the fact that the house he built stands. It stands! Here comes the fire, and there go the houses built of hay, wood, and

stubble. What about mine? Christ says it shall stand like a rock amid the rushing water, and like a house God built on the sure foundation. It stands—or, as the Book says, his work remains. Ah, people, some of you have done work already in your life that can never be destroyed. It has gone up into heaven. Somebody went to glory who found Christ through you. And if as many hells originated as there are drops of water in the sea, they could not touch that bit of work. It remains! I love to think there are prayers up before God's throne, in that golden chalice from which the sweet incense rises, and they represent work that remains and that can never be changed. And He shall receive the commendation of Christ.

Now the man who built hay, wood and stubble on the good foundation shall receive no such commendation. He cannot receive it. How could the truthful Christ say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" to the man who built only rubbish on the foundation? Do you think He could say, "Well done" to you at this moment? Are you on the foundation? I asked you a minute ago. What are you building on that foundation? I ask you now. Some of you have not much building time left.

It was suggested to me only last week that I was in danger of losing some of you people by faithfully telling you what I believe to be the truth. I can better afford to lose you, my friends, than to have you say in the day of judgment, "Had you been more faithful it would have been better for us." I am not afraid of losing you—there is only one thing I am afraid of losing, and that is the smile of Christ who has owned me for over thirty years.

So what sort of a building are you erecting? You middle-aged men, it is in middle life that you are most likely

to lose out Godward. I have been watching the preachers who forsake the truth, and it is in middle life they go. And I have been watching church members who fail, and it is in middle life they lose out. I do not know what is in that middle life, but it seems to be the time when more are lost to God than at any other time.

Young people, if you put down a strata of hay, wood, or stubble in early life, you may build upon it, but the strata of rubbish has got to be dealt with. And sometimes I have seen that layer of rubbish topple a whole house over; and sometimes I have seen that same hay, wood, and stubble so that no one could build gold, silver, and precious stones thereon. So you had better be careful, for God is soon going to let loose the fire, and as it comes moving along, the house of hay, wood, and stubble will be lost and forever gone, and the spiritual alone remains, for "The world passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

IX

WHERE ARE OUR DEAD?

“To depart, and to be with Christ.”—Philippians 1:23.

I SHALL give you three passages of Scripture that are plain enough for a child to understand and that settle forever the question, Where are our dead?

And I preface what I shall say by stating that I do not believe God has given one word of disclosure concerning the unseen since the Bible was written. Not one word! In my judgment all who say they have received utterances from God concerning the unseen world consciously or unconsciously lie. That there have come revelations concerning the unseen from the devil, I am not disposed to deny. I read in my Bible that one of the signs of the end will be that sort of thing. And I should not at all wonder but Satan is at the heart of this widespread revival of so-called spiritism. I do not believe God would ever speak through most of those people who say they obtain revelations from Him today. When He gave the New Testament He talked through good men's lips. But the large majority of all who pretend to bring us disclosures of the future are not good men and women. Furthermore, I see no need of God making any additional revelation concerning the future than that He has made in His own Word. If we will only believe the Bible, and accept it as the truth of God, we shall find in it all we need in connection with our study of the future or our preparation for entering that future.

Now in Philippians one, twenty-one, Paul says, “To die

is gain." But that sentence is not true, for it is not gain to die. And so unless there is something else connected with the utterance I could not and I would not believe it. It is not gain to the eye to go down underneath the sod. It is not gain to the heart to lie in "cold abstraction and to rot." It is not gain to anything connected with the one who goes. I know there are people who say, "To die is gain," some of them wicked people who would be glad to get out of the present consequences of their sin because they have no belief in a future retribution; some of them cowardly people who are tired of the conflict and would be willing for it to cease. But the Apostle Paul was not that kind of man. The Apostle Paul was a man among men, God's man, no coward; nor was he a man who loved sin, but on the contrary hated it. So when he says, "To die is gain," I know that is not all he said, because if it were all he affirmed on that subject, it is not true. Now what does he say in that sentence. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Ah, that alters the whole thing. Now it is true; but the four words isolated from their connection are not true. "To die is gain"—that is not true—but with Paul's enlargement, it becomes a magnificent fact.

But what did he mean when he said, "For me to live is Christ"? Well, after carefully thinking it all over I believe we can summarize his meaning in two words. He meant fellowship with Jesus, and following Jesus. Now to die is no gain if the grave is the goal. For there is no fellowship with Jesus in the tomb, nor is there any following Jesus among the clods. So he does not mean cessation of existence, else he would not say, To live is Christ, and to die is to get something that is a gain over even that. I cannot help thinking of Mr. Cash who used to work with us here. He loved to pray, to work with people, to have

fellowship with Christ and follow Christ. Now if he is in the grave, my soul, how he has lost out! But if he who had fellowship with Christ and who followed Christ is not in the grave at all, well, then there is comfort for us and a great hope. To die is gain, because I am in Christ, says Paul.

Now let us go on to the twenty-third verse of this same chapter, Philippians one,—“To depart, and be with Christ is far better.” We have seen that he said “To die is gain” because he was in Christ. But now he goes a step farther and says, “To depart, and be with Christ is far better.” Far better! Why you know I have not got the meaning of those words into my own mind yet. For he does not merely say it is “better,” but he says it is “far better” to depart, and be with Christ. So let us look at that word “depart” for a moment. Does he say annihilated, or intimate that we cease to exist? No! I departed from my home at Viewpoint this morning, but I did not cease to be; and I shall depart from this church in a few minutes and go to Viewpoint, but I shall not cease to exist. I depart, says Paul, that is all. And you know he loved that word “depart,” did this same apostle, because down at the end of the trail of his life he said, “The time of my departure is at hand,” not “the time of my *death*”—Paul hated that word—not “the time of my cessation from life,” but “the time of my departure.” Did you not go down and see your friend depart from the depot? But did you not go and hang crepe on your arm because he had departed? No, for he was still alive, and that is the very thought Paul had in mind. He says, “For me to depart,” that is all. But that is not all he says, thank God, for he adds, “For me to depart”—and having departed from here—“to be with Christ is far better.”

So wherever Jesus Christ is, Paul is. Because he says, "I depart to be with Christ." But where is Christ? Well, there are people who tell you He is in the grave. I met some people a few days ago who did not believe He ever rose from the dead. They say He is still dead, and He is as much dead as though He had never lived. Is that so? Well, then Paul is dead, and is dead as though he had never existed. But no matter what the preacher tells you, it is a lie that Jesus Christ died and did not rise again. For that He rose from the dead, is the plain and well supported affirmation of the Scripture. Then where is He?

Now an angel ought to be good authority, and an angel said, "This same Jesus who has gone up into heaven shall so come in like manner." Then we know where He has gone. And when Jesus appeared to John in the Apocalyptic vision He said, "I am Jesus that liveth, and was dead, but am alive forevermore." Therefore it is blasphemous to say that Jesus did not rise from the dead, for it is a contradiction of His own word from heaven! I say then we know where Jesus is, and if Paul departed to be with Christ, we know where Paul is. Ah, let us have no juggling over these words, for I am talking this morning so that a child may get hold of the argument, and I am using the plain words of the Book when I say I know where Christ is, and if Paul is with Christ, I know where Paul is, for he is with Christ, which is far better. Thus you see in the former sentence he said it was a gain to die, while now he says it is far better to depart, and be with Christ. So evermore remember this scripture of the first chapter of Philippians.

And then I will take you to the Second Corinthians, chapter five and verses six to eight. And Paul says this, "We know that while we are at home in the body, we are

absent from the Lord." Now we are not absent from the Lord as a spiritual presence. Let us be clear on that. We are not absent from the Lord this morning in this church as a spiritual presence, for He is here. And yet Paul says, "While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." He means we are absent from the Lord's visible presence in the glory, in the heaven where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. While we are at home in this body he says we are absent from the Lord. Now I repeat, that cannot mean we are absent from Him as a spiritual presence, but it means we are absent from Him as a present visible Saviour.

"At home in the body." The only place I am really at home is in the body. I am not at home in the house because somebody wants the chair that I wish to sit in, and so I am disturbed. But I am at home in my body; so at home that if I want to move, my foot takes me before ever I can say, "Foot, I want to travel"; and my hand reaches the book for me before I ever say, "Hand, reach it"; and my tongue speaks for me before I can ever ask it to speak for me. At home in the body! Think that over, how surely and completely you are at home in the body. Now listen. When we are absent—Second Corinthians five, verses six to eight—from the body, where shall we be then? Absent from the body, at home with the Lord! The very same phrase. Let me repeat, I am at home in my body, Oh, how thoroughly at home. Never a remonstrance coming to me from this physical home I am in. Well, when I get out of this home where I am absent from the Lord's visible presence, I shall be at home—same phrase I repeat—I shall be at home with the Lord. Now then I say again, Where is the Lord? If He is in the grave, that is where I am going; and I do not know how I shall be

at home with Him in the grave because I shall not know anything. But having found out He is in the heavens, if I am at home with the Lord whenever I am absent from the body, I know where I shall be. And Paul twice over has given us that significant phrase, "with Christ." A man came up to me sometime ago and said, "Mr. Hinson, where is Paradise?" And I said, "I neither know nor care. I do not care anything about Paradise for I have got a better thing than Paradise. I shall be with Christ, and the location of where I am then is no concern of mine. If I am with Him, that is enough for me. I do not care whether it is England, America, the South Sea Islands, or where it is, if I am with Him, that will suffice." So do not get your mind away from the great fact that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. I say, "At home with the Lord!"

At home with Him! Now think back and remember how we are at home in the body. At home! But the very same words are used by the apostle to describe our appearance when we depart from this present life, and when we become absent from the body to be present with and at home with the Lord. That is where I shall be. Ah, you say, what about the intermediate state? Better far to ask what about being at home with the Lord! For it does not matter whether it is an intermediate, mediate, or some other state if I am with the Lord, that is all I want to know. Now remember I told you I would give you three scriptures on which you can put your fingers and rest your souls, so that you will no longer need to have a bit of apprehension as to where are our dead, for you will have that settled forever by the sure word of God.

Now in First Thessalonians four, fourteen, we read, "They also who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him." Let

us recapitulate and see where we have arrived in our study. "For me to live is Christ, and therefore to die is gain"—"To depart and be with Christ is far better"—"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." Now add this other verse, "They also who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him." I said once what I say again, that it is impossible for even God to bring with Him what He has not got. It cannot be done. If they are with Him, He can bring them with Him, but if they are not, He cannot! Oh but you say, does not that same scripture say they who are in the graves shall come out? Yes, it does. And that word "sleep" will help us now, for "They who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." "Sleep" is a word that takes you back into the Gospels, for Christ said one day, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." And he created consternation among his disciples, which found expression when they said, "Lord, if he sleep"—though he may be sick—"he should do well." And Jesus had to get away from his wonderful high beautiful word and say plainly, "Lazarus is dead." They could not understand that word "sleep" as related to death. And then you recall how He went down to Bethany, and Martha said, "If Thou had'st been here, my brother had not died." And He said, "Martha, there is a resurrection!" And she said, "I know at the last day"—but she did not know, because there is not going to be a general resurrection at any last day. And Jesus drew her thoughts away from that supposition as He spoke of the resurrection power reposing in Himself which she had not realized. And when He said, "Thy brother shall rise," she answered, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he has been dead four days." Now it was plain that Lazarus was in the grave in the condition Martha described. But there is a Lazarus Jesus spoke of as being asleep. So there is a

Lazarus dead—a Lazarus in death's grasp—but there is another Lazarus, concerning whom Jesus said, He is asleep. There is the Lazarus down there that will never come up—since he died a second time—till Christ comes with the resurrection trumpet. But there is the Lazarus who at the death of his body went to be with Christ, which is far better, to be at home with the Lord, and to come back with Christ when He returns.

Take another illustration. One day Jesus was asked to go down to a house where a little girl was dead. And He appeared and used his old word, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." And they laughed him to scorn. And according to their beliefs they were right, for she was dead and everybody knew it, for there was not a pulse, nor a breath, nor a drop of live blood! Well, was He wrong? No, He was talking about another maid. That little body that the father had held on his knee was dead; but there was the real maid who dwelt in that body that was called "the maid" and she was asleep, so that Jesus told the truth when he said, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth."

Now Paul, you see, had learned this in Christ's school, for he says in the lesson you read at the beginning of the service, "We shall not all sleep." He meant what the world calls "die." "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." And now in this scripture of First Thessalonians four, fourteen, he says, "They who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him." You see where they are; for they departed to be with Christ, and they are at home with the Lord, and they are sleeping in Jesus; and now we see how God will bring them with Him when "He returns the second time without sin unto salvation."

And I want you to notice as I close, that I did not announce as my theme, "Where are the dead?" But I an-

nounced, "Where are our dead," the righteous, believing, saintly dead. I am saying no word about those who died in their sins. I am only affirming concerning the saints who are following where Paul went, what the Scripture says that they are with Christ, that they are present with the Lord, that they are at home with the Lord, and that when He comes they are coming with Him.

Now this sermon of mine will be assailed by the Seventh-Day Adventist, who believes that when he goes into the grave all there is of him goes and stays there until the resurrection. And all I have to say about that is this: It is not Scriptural. For I am not at home with the Lord in the grave, as He is not there Himself; and I am not with Christ in the grave, for He is not there. And someone else will assail it by saying that there is no proof that man is anything except that which dies and is buried. Well, God help us if that is so; but God be thanked that is *not* so! And then the "Eddyite" will say that there is not any death at all. Well, all I have got to say about that is this—I will give you another year, month, week, day, and you will prove by dying there is death. For the woman whose words you read when you read *Science and Health*, declared, "There is no death," but she died all the same. And those who have been looking for her to come back have never seen her. I do not care what these people say, for I have nailed my colors to the mast of Holy Scripture, and if that Book is not true, there is nobody knows anything at all about the future; but if that Book is true, I know this morning that a man who lives in Christ said, "Death is gain," and therefore he did not go to the grave, for that is not gain; and he said, "To depart, and be with Christ is far better"; and "To be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord," and that is beautiful beyond descrip-

tion; and everyone who falls asleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him when He comes.

My friends, do not leave God's wonderful Word for some man or woman of doubtful reputation who pretends to have the ear of the Almighty as you have it not. Do not leave the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the ouija board. And do not ask any long-haired man or short-haired woman in a dirty attic looking into a bit of glass to tell you things the great God never intended you to know. And do not let slip the abounding abiding comfort you have in knowing concerning your beloved who fell asleep in Jesus, that they are with the Lord, that they are at home with the Lord, and that they will come with the Lord when He returns. So I say we have positive, sufficient, immovable, uncontradictable proof that our dead are with Jesus Christ, and where Jesus Christ is we know, and therefore we know where they are. Amen.

X

THE WOMAN OF SORROWS

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother."—
John 19:25.

AS YOU associate Eve with Eden, and Hannah with Samuel, and Miriam with Moses, so you associate Mary with sorrow. And the strange thing is that her chief sorrow was occasioned by Jesus.

From all we can find out, she was a meditative, calm country girl, who might have lived an uneventful life, placid and happy, and passed from anonymity into eternity having lived an undisturbed life—only Jesus came, and Jesus filled her life with sorrow. For you know the story; and no Chicago University fool has dimmed the brilliancy of it to you. One day Gabriel himself said, "Thou shalt bear a son," and she said, "That cannot be." But he said, "It will be, for the Holy Ghost shall overshadow thee, and there shall be born of thee the Messiah." Now you have very little imagination if you cannot, to an extent at least, understand the wild turmoil into which that young woman's soul was flung. And Joseph, her husband to be, made it all the worse. For he was a just man, and loved her, and she loved him; but he could not understand this thing that had happened. He thought he would put her away quietly and say nothing about it, letting her bear her shame as best she could and live out her life as she might live it. What a pang that must have caused the heart of the mother of Jesus! And then when Jesus was to be born—oh, how

the mother prepares for the child that is coming, gets the little wardrobe and everything ready—my God! she had to bear her Child in a stable, and all the crib she had for Him was a manger!

You know that I do not get my sermons from the usual sources of sermons; so I went yesterday and looked at my little grandson, and thought of how his mother would like to bear him in a stable and cradle him in a manger. That is the way to prepare sermons—get down to the facts of the case, and do not go theorizing.

And then some wise men came with gifts, such as Mary had never seen in her life. She knew very little about gold, and I have often wondered what she did with the gifts the Magi brought. Her visitors confused her. The idea of receiving a deputation—*influential, learned, exalted*—in a stable! A little later when she took the babe to the Temple, a good old man there looked at the Boy and said, “At last, at last! I always knew I should see the Messiah before I died! But, O woman, a sword shall pierce through your heart! For that Child is set for the falling and rising again of many.” And then bloody Herod started his diabolism, and they had to take the Baby by night and hurry down into the land of Egypt; and every startled bird brought Mary’s heart up in her choked throat, and a mouse rustling among the dried leaves and grass sounded like Sinai’s trumpet when it “pealed so loud.” Returning they went to Nazareth, and the Boy grew up in Nazareth. Now God forbid that I should go where I have no business to go, but I have sat down in the quiet and wondered how that Boy managed to grow up in that Nazareth home. For there were gossiping neighbors around, and their children would get foul of this Boy sometimes. But a discreet silence and pause will be better right here than a lot of

words! Mary knew some Scripture, and I do not know whether she had any inkling of the destiny of that strange Boy of hers or not, because I suppose she, too, imagined the Messiah would take the Roman Cæsar and oust him from the throne—but I do not want to be wise above what I know.

And He grew up. She lost Him when He was twelve years old, and when she found Him, He said, “Did you not know I must be in my Father’s house attending to my Father’s business?” And that gives me a wonderful little inkling. She had the sadness of seeing this Boy grow away from her. She could not follow Him where He went; she could not answer His questions; she could not understand His replies. And there was that about Him that disconcerted Mary, and made her life happily miserable and gloriously grieved. And then He went away one day—laid aside the tools in the carpenter shop that He had used, swept the fragrant shavings from the floor for the last time, and went out under the slanting sunlight to return to that shop no more. And as He stretched Himself in the light, Mary saw the shadow of a cross on the wall, and the little dove up in the olive tree moaned—and she wept.

One other word. One day she saw Him go away again. He went away, though it was strange He could travel, for He had spikes through His hands and through His feet; and on His brow that she had kissed was a thorny turban; and in His side that she had washed so many times was the gaping wound.

Yes, Mary was the woman of sorrows. And you know I should never have said all this but it leads up to a wonderful fact, that whoever in this life gets near Jesus Christ gets troubled. As I was thinking out this sermon I caught myself humming an old hymn—

"If I find Him, if I follow,
What my guerdon here?
Many a labor, many a sorrow,
Many a tear."

Why, that is as true as gospel. That is what you get, "many a labor, many a sorrow," that otherwise you would miss. In my first church—where I learned the little I know—I saw the greatest work of grace that I ever saw in my life. About a hundred young men, I judge, came in one week. They had gathered on Saturday evening in a prayer meeting of their own, and I went over to see what they were doing. And when I went in, the chairman of that fine band of young men was leading them in the singing of this hymn—

"I have anchored my soul in a haven of rest,
And I sail the wild seas no more."

When they got through I said, "Men, you were singing some fine nonsense!" And they looked, for they loved me and they knew I loved them. And I said, "You have not 'anchored your souls in a haven of rest,' and you will 'sail the wild seas' *some* more." Ah, it was not long before that young leader was stricken down.

So remember that the good Book says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross"—and not one of you knows what comes next—"daily!" That is the condition of discipleship—to take up the cross daily, and deny self daily, and follow Him daily. And then I remember how Paul says, "I die daily." Why, that is a poor way to live! And in the expressive language of the Greek he says, "I hit myself until I am black and blue under the eyes, keeping my body under." Well, would it not be better to let it get up? But Jesus

commanded him to keep it under. And then I read, "Up in heaven they who come out of the great tribulation will sing the triumphant song."

And so Elizabeth will touch Jesus through John the Baptist, and Elizabeth will have her old age all upset and cruelly disturbed; and Zacharias shall indirectly touch Christ, and because of that shall be dumb for months; and Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, will take care of the little Lad, but Joseph shall be torn asunder through love for Mary and fear for her character; and the poor virgin mother shall be the Mother of Sorrows; and it shall all be through contact with Jesus.

There was a young man one day who had great possessions, and he came up to Jesus, and had a little talk with Him, and he went away sorrowful—full of sorrow! Why? Because he had gone to Jesus and got disturbed.

And I—why, I should have been in the British army, and instead of that I have been a Baptist minister all my life! I should have been doing a few hours work in the day and then sticking out my chest and walking the street! And now I have to think, and study, and pray, and groan, and put up with you people! And it is all because I came to Jesus! I should have had money, too. For you see, if it had not been for Jesus, I should never have given to foreign missions or education. So now I am out of pocket because of Christ.

Thus, you see, nearness to Jesus may occasion sorrow. Ah, and the nearer you get the more sorrow you have. I was told one day of a man who used to patronize us once a month perhaps, and he said he did not like the preacher because the preacher was so grave. Well, it is enough to make any man grave to see people like that man going around! And when you remember the condition of the

world and the church, is it any wonder we look grave and pray and have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. I sat in my study this morning and shivered as I thought of those poppies growing over in France, and those ridges which are greener than any in Oregon because they are fertilized by the best blood of the old world; and then this poor fool wanted me to be all the time simpering! Ah, then I hum again—

“If I find Him, if I follow,
What my guerdon here?
Many a labor, many a sorrow,
Many a tear.”

And now I want to show you the massive compensation that repaid Mary, the woman of sorrows, for all her great grief. For Elizabeth gave her a title, though she was not aware of doing it. She called her the “Mother of my Lord.” That was worth having a lot of sorrow for, was it not? A woman had the privilege of mothering Jesus! The Mother of my Lord! Why it seems to me it would be worth going through hell to get a title like that. The Mother of my Lord! But Mary also mothered the Lord. I shall believe till I die she patched Christ’s clothes, because they were poor in that Nazarene family. And, after all, when you get far enough away from it there is a lot of satisfaction in a patch! And I should think there is a lot of satisfaction in patching, too. My old mother used to patch my clothes while she sang, “Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah.” Many of the mothers of today neither patch the children’s clothes nor sing hymns. But Mary mothered the Lord, and she patched His clothes—I shall always think that—and she heard Him say His prayers. And that is another thing where American mothers fail.

And did you ever wonder whence Jesus got His wonderful knowledge of the Bible? I wonder how much of that Mary taught Him, and I wonder how much your boy knows of his Bible that he learned from your lips.

But I was talking about Mary's massive compensation, for she had it. When He was dying—and God only knows what sorrow He had on that cross, for no human being can ever imagine it—yet out of all His distress He looked at His mother and commended her to John—not to Peter, for Peter was one of those impetuous men who would have stumbled over Mary's feet some day, but John, who was the Apostle of Love. And Mary may have had a beautiful old age there with John! And today she has compensation up there in the stars, for none can take away from Mary the consciousness that hers was the bosom the Child slept on; and for His sweet sake she endured the torture of misrepresentation, and mistrust, and suspicion. And the thousand little kindnesses she showed to Jesus Christ she remembers up there, and they are like the wine of heaven to her lip.

Now, this sorrow occasioned by contact with Jesus is an ordinary law, and it runs through all life. For Moses looked at the riches of Egypt,—and we are beginning to realize a little of the grandeur of those same riches,—but he looked at them all and turned away, choosing reproach with the people of God rather than the treasures of the hoary land of Egypt. And for forty years he kept sheep; and for another forty years he fought with devils as he led the Israelites through the wilderness; and then he laid himself down to die, disappointed, outside Canaan, having seen the land from afar only, and seeing Joshua and Caleb go into it.

"But had he not high honor, the hillside for his pall,
To lie in state while angels wait with stars for tapers tall,
And the dark rock pines like tossing plumes over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land to lay him in his grave."

He had compensation. And now I am turning to the Book of Revelation, where I read, "And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb." Does he not have compensation?

And it is the law that runs through your life and mine. Oh, there is never a tear you ever shed for Christ's sake but it shall have a rainbow of glory encircling it at the last. And the more tears you shed the more glorious you will be. And if your eyes are wet with tears of sympathy with Jesus, when you go into the next world God's own fingers will wipe those tears from your eyes. And every thorn that has pierced you for Christ's sake will grow roses for you up in the glory. And the dollar you could illy afford when you gave it to Jesus Christ, will be, not a bit of gold up there, but it will become a smile and a eulogy from the face and lips of Jesus Christ. And, men and women, if I could only tell you the little I saw last week of the compensation, you would rush pell-mell into self-denial, into self-sacrifice, and self-slaughter; and the more you could get hurt, the happier you would be; and the more wounds you could receive, the more glorious you would feel in your souls.

But it is coming, the compensation. I recall how Brainerd among the Indians sat down on a bank of snow, and poured the snow water out of his shoes, and coughed, and then put on his shoes and went to the next tepee to tell them about Jesus Christ. But his reward is sure, I tell you. And you and I—I am afraid for us, for we have not suffered enough, we have not denied ourselves enough, we

have not sacrificed ourselves enough. We have looked out for the easy places and the good things, and I am fearful regarding us. Men and women, learn to empty your pockets for Jesus Christ; learn to get tired; learn to shorten your lives for Jesus Christ; covet to have the spirit of the man who marched into the Roman amphitheater in the olden time to be killed, and said, "God, we are wheat to be ground for Thee." Ah, do not cherish the grain of wheat selfishly, but let it die, and it will bring forth fruit eternal.

There was a great regiment of Roman soldiers, soon after the time of Jesus, called the "Thundering Legion." And to the captain of the troop there was taken the word one day that some of those men had accepted the religion of the Nazarene. And he stood up one night, and said, "Any of you who believe in the Christ, stand up!" And forty men stood up. And he said, "Strip to the skin!" And they did so. And he said, "Go and stand on that frozen lake with the wind howling about you until you are prepared to abandon your Nazarene God, when you can come in here to the light and the warmth, but not until then!" And forty naked men marched out into that howling storm on a winter's night, and as they took their places on the ice they lifted their voices and said,

"Christ, forty wrestlers have come out to wrestle for Thee,
Give them, O Christ, the victory!"

And one of them weakened. Is it any wonder? And he rushed into the barracks where the light was, and the warmth, his poor teeth chattering and his flesh nearly frozen. And the captain looked at him, and then unbuttoned his clothes and took them off, and went out and said, "I take his place!" And again the whole forty said,

"Christ, forty wrestlers have come out to wrestle for Thee,
Give them, O Christ, the victory!"

And He did, for in the morning there were forty corpses of brave men on that ice.

Would you do it? By the living God, I would! Yes, I would! But are you doing it in another way? What was it you said—the tithe was too heavy, the tenth too much to give to God? Oh, you would look well out on the ice, would you not? And did not you say it was a little too rainy to go to prayer meeting? What a figure you would cut on the ice, would you not? And you poor unhealthy mortals who cannot come to church on Sunday night because you are afraid of getting cold! You know we ought to learn from the study this morning, that if we companion with Jesus we shall have to suffer because of it. And if we have the easy, comfortable time we boast of, it is our reproach and our disgrace.

So have another look at Mary, the woman of sorrows; and learn that her sorrow was occasioned by Jesus; and that afterward He turned it into a great and eternal rejoicing. Put then your feet down on the path of sorrow, for the path of sorrow—and that path alone—leads to the land where the sorrow is unknown.

XI

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

"Our gathering together in Christ."—2 Thessalonians 2:1.

I NOTICE gathering around Jesus are groups characterized by numbers. For instance, the Apostle Paul in the Corinthians says, "Christ was seen of about five hundred brethren at once." We know little about the five hundred who surrounded our Lord on this occasion; but they did not live in vain, because twenty-five years after Christ went to heaven, the Apostle Paul was able to say, "There they stand, over two hundred and fifty of them still alive, and they saw the risen Jesus." They were valuable to the apostle; because when some fool said that the dead are not raised up, the apostle was able to point to over two hundred and fifty men who all at the same time saw the risen Lord.

That vision of the risen Christ did two things for those men, so the apostle says. It changed their existence into a waiting, and it changed their death into a sleep. For he says, "He showed Himself unto above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain, though some are fallen asleep." So the vision of the risen Lord changed the life of those men, and it became a waiting, an expectancy, a life aquiver with anticipation. And the people thought them strange men, for they were not worldly wise. It changed life. May I say it always does. For no man can ever see the risen Lord but his life changes. He can never be the same afterward that he was before.

He can never look at things out of the same eyes, or cherish the same ambition, or be possessed of the same motives. Old things pass away and all things become new with the sight of the risen Christ.

And death—why that is clean removed by this life-imparting vision of the risen Jesus. And all the man who has seen the Lord ever does is to fall asleep. Did you tremble, were you apprehensive about falling asleep last night? Was it not what you wanted? Was it not what refreshed you and brought you here this morning in vigor, all alert and able for any task? Well, they saw the risen Lord, and then their life was changed into a waiting on Him, and after they had waited on Him long enough here they simply nestled up close to Christ and went to sleep. If you please, give me a religion that does that for people; a religion that changes life, so that instead of being victims of circumstance we become living sons of God; so that instead of drifting down the time stream, our life barks are steered by the nail-pierced hands of Jesus, and we spend our time in waiting to do His will and execute His commandments and run on His errands; and then we fall asleep.

Then I find in another part of this New Testament that the Lord took seventy of His disciples and sent them before Him to announce Him. That looks like a step in advance. Here the people who have seen the King and who love the Christ are commissioned to go and do work for Him. The record is very significant. It says that they went before Him to tell the people, as would heralds, of the coming Christ. And the illustration I always use when I am talking about this I must hurry to present to you. You know what a "sandwich man" is, do you not? You have seen him on your streets. He is a man with a board in front and

behind, announcing a show or a ball-game or a bargain sale or something, and because he is in between the two boards we naturally think of a sandwich, and call him a "sandwich man." Jesus Christ would love to have some sandwich men in this city, so that whether you look at them as they approach or as they recede from you, you might always have Jesus suggested to you. I wonder if we are among those seventy.

In the men's Bible class this morning I said, "You men ought to be ashamed of yourselves if you are not announcing Jesus Christ, for that is your function, your province, your commission. In Great Britain, government letters go to any part of the empire unstamped, because across them is written, "On his Majesty's service"; and we ought evermore to be as were the seventy, on the business of the King. And if somebody said, "What are you doing now?" I ought to be able to reply, without faltering, "I am doing this because I am on His Majesty's service." Oh, pardon me, but you are not allowed to spend your holiday tomorrow just as you like. You have to spend it on His service. And I wish I could reach the ears of some whom I miss this morning and say, you are not at liberty to go wheresoever you see fit. You are among the seventy who have been sent by Jesus. And whether you are seeking recreation or doing work, whether it be on Monday or on Sunday, you are never released from your continuous obligation to herald Jesus Christ.

"Why do you stand like that, all slack and unfitting an officer of the British army?" asked Wellington.

And the reply which annoyed the Iron Duke was the statement, "I am off duty, Sir."

"But a British officer is never off duty; so resume your military standing!" And whenever you suggest to Jesus

Christ that you are off duty, He will lovingly chide you and graciously reprimand you, and inform you that a Christian is never released from being on his Majesty's service.

Then I find the number twelve in the Book. He selected twelve that they might be with Him. I remember that when I first saw that, I thought how unfortunate for the seventy to be sent away and not have the privilege of being continually with Christ. I mourned over that quite a bit, and then a happy though funny thought came into my mind. Was it not worth something after all for Jesus to have such confidence in those seventy men as to know He might send them away and they would still be true and do His bidding and announce Him as He had requested? Ah, very often you and I think if only we could retire to some quiet place and get out of the bustle of the world and away from all human entanglements, to have our ears open to the melody of heaven and never catch the discord of the world any more, how good it would be. Yet is it not a heartening thought that God has put you on a streetcar and trusted you to announce Him there? And God has put you in an office and has said, "I have such trust in you that I know you will be true to me here." And God has put you in a school and has said, "I know in that school you will never betray me, and you will never be false to me." After all they had some reward, I think, those seventy, although they were denied the privilege of being all the time with Jesus.

He was justified in retaining those twelve with Him, for they had a great work to do. They had to seal their testimony with their blood. Each of them save one—and probably that one also—died a violent death. And they had to write a Bible which records the sayings and doings of Jesus. And they had to learn His spirit. They had to know how He looked at facts, thought about things, and what was His

judgment of men; and therefore He kept them with Him. They had fellowship with Him, and we can have that even if we are among the seventy. Oh, I admit there are times when I wish I had walked old Judea and the streets of Jerusalem with the Lord Christ in those days, but there are other times when I am thankful I did not. For you see if you had been with Jesus in Jerusalem then, and He had stayed there and you left, you would have gone away from the Lord. But now He is a spiritual presence. He is with us in this house of worship. He is with the sailor on the sea, with the Salvation Army officer in the slums, with us all the time. And if I am going, as I humbly trust I am this morning, on my mission of announcing Jesus, He is with me. We can have fellowship even while we announce.

And will you harken, people, when I tell you I do not think much will come of the announcement if you are out of fellowship with the King Himself. In the Sunday-school class your words amount to very little unless your heart is sympathetically beating with the heart of Jesus Christ. For I find that the best preparation for preaching a sermon is to have the heart surcharged with the presence of the Christ about whom I am going to speak. You must have fellowship with Him.

And I must put in another word here. If you cease to have fellowship with Jesus, you will slide down away from Him. Perhaps the saddest thing I have known in my life has been the declension of people who have once walked with Christ. I think that has grieved me more than anything else that has happened to me. I have watched them going away. In my study of them I have noticed that they all commenced with a diminishing fellowship with Christ. They ceased to talk to Him, they stopped letting Him talk back to them through His Word. So I say to you out of a

very wide observation and a bitter one, that when you cease to have fellowship with Jesus you are on the high road to spiritual ruin.

Now I come to the figure three, and I find that three men were particularly favored during the earthly ministry of Jesus. Peter, James, and John were with Him three times when nobody else was allowed in the place. They saw the out-flashing of His glory on the Transfiguration Hill. They saw the outpouring of His power when He raised the dead child to life. They saw His overwhelming agony when He prayed and groaned and sweat blood in Gethsemane garden. Three wonderful privileges. To see His glory! I always think with exultation how when Peter was an old man and sat down to write an epistle he harked back to that Transfiguration Mountain, as he said, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, for we remember the glory that we saw with Him in the mount." Ah, there are some unforgettable experiences, and if a man has had them he can never get away from them. And that outraging glory of Jesus on Transfiguration Hill shone before Simon Peter until he entered the greater glory of heaven. And they saw the outputting of His power. And he never doubts Christ who has seen that.

Sometime ago, far away from here, a man asked me if I had the same zeal, the same freshness, the same ardor in connection with preaching that I had when I commenced. And I said, "No, I have not the same, I have it increased a hundred-fold!" And I will tell you what has largely increased it. I have seen His power. They tell me that the gospel for the twentieth century is a gospel of the soup kitchen, and the better sewage of the city, and the uplift of humanity. But I think the gospel for the twentieth century is the gospel that saved my soul! I think the gospel

for this year of our Lord is the gospel that puts a man into right adjustment with Almighty God. I sometimes sit down and think of the thousands I have welcomed into the Christian church, and every single one of them is an argument evidencing the outputting of the power of Jesus to buttress my faith, and make me resolute and doggedly determined to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the end.

But I do not envy these three apostles their vision of the glory or power so much as I envy them their vision of the agony of Christ in Gethsemane. And I will tell you why in a word. Anybody can share my happiness. When I am well and all the tides of being pulsate with power, I do not care with whom I fraternize. But when the pain comes, and the dreariness and the weird mood and the soul agony I do not want anybody near then except those of whom I am sure and whose hearts are as my heart; and so if Jesus honors me enough to let me have "fellowship with Him in His suffering," my crown has been won. You know that phrase I just used is a quotation. For the Apostle Paul said he had a great hunger and thirst and yearning for one thing, for he said, "This is the thing I yearn for, to have fellowship with Jesus in his suffering."

I often think of a poor benighted preacher we had in this city once, and one memorable afternoon he undertook to tell us how to preach. Simpering a great deal himself, he said, "You should always go on the platform with a smile." Well, now, it seems to me that occasionally the smile might leave the face as one remembered how Jesus Christ bought us with His own blood, and that unless a man is saved by Jesus Christ he is going to an eternal hell. And somehow or other I do not think that the most befitting thing at a funeral service is a grimace. We are getting too far away from this "fellowship with Christ and His suffering." We are

getting altogether too flippant. It is just possible there are things in that Book and things in life that do not call for a jest or the antics of someone who missed the fitting sphere of the circus and fell into the pulpit! I find that these three had fellowship with Christ in His suffering. I humbly hope if I have never had it I may live to experience it; and when I am there I greatly trust I may find you, my people, alongside me.

And then I come to the single figure, one, and I read, "There was leaning on the bosom of Jesus, one—John." Now do you know this apostle had a degree, and I have never seen a man more vain of his degree in my life than was John. He vaunts it and flaunts it all the time. And when he wrote that fourth gospel, three times over he said, "I have got a degree, and I would like you to be acquainted with it." And his degree was a strange one, so far as the lettering of it would signify, for it was not D.D. but it was W.J.L. A fine degree that, my masters!—"Whom Jesus loved." John wrote W.J.L. after his name. "Ah, yes," he said, "I am His apostle, and when you have written down my name, be sure you put down my degree, W.J.L., Whom Jesus Loved."

I have searched my heart a good deal lately to see if I could lay claim to that degree. I was very disconsolate when I commenced my search, because I had not rightly understood the degree. I thought it read, "who loved Jesus." And I said, I am almost afraid to say I do love Thee, Master. I know I want to. I would if I could. I would go on my hands and knees around the state if it were possible so to evidence my love for Thee. And then I looked at the degree again, and saw that it did not mean what I fancied it to mean. It was "whom Jesus loved," not "who loved Jesus." And then I went up to the cross and got my diploma, and

I have had my degree ever since. Oh, I am the man whom Jesus loved, for whom Jesus died, for whom God emptied heaven when He so loved the world that He gave His Son to die. And I go and stand alongside John and I say, "My gifts are not like yours, nor my talents, nor my service, but He loved me when He said, 'It is finished' every bit as much as He loved you." And you see this man whom Jesus loved could put his head down on the very bosom of the Lord. And let me tell you that the great advantage of being there is that you can hear things from the lips of Jesus that other folks do not catch. John had his ear up close to Christ's mouth, and when the disciples wanted to know the name of the traitor, they motioned to John to ask the question of Jesus, and he got the reply from Him. Have you never wondered why some humble Christian startles you by his reflections about Christ and the things of heaven? Have you ever wondered why some uncultured Sunday-school teacher holds a class and leads every member of it to Christ? Have you ever contemplated how some preacher of the gospel gets hold of some strange things from the Word of God, so that as we listen we say we never saw it like that before? You will generally find that those persons are illustrated by this figure one; they were with John leaning on the bosom of the Lord, with their ears so near to Christ's lips that they catch His whisper. Deep and beautiful things, you know, are not to be shouted. They can never be imparted except in a whisper. So unless our ears are close up to His lips we cannot catch those whispers of His that really are the music of the soul.

Once more and I stop. I read in the Testament this morning where John saw a great multitude. And if you can tell me how many were in the multitude, I shall be obliged to you. There were ten thousand times ten thousand, and

thousands of thousands. And they were all up there in glory with John, who symbolizes all those who lean on the bosom of Christ and so have fellowship with Him. And the three were there, those who communed with Christ in the hidden secret places. And the twelve were there who had companionship with Jesus. And the seventy were there who were God's sandwich men upon the earth. And the five hundred were there, who saw the risen Lord and had life and death changed by the sight. They were all there, in the innumerable multitude who out of all sorts of experiences found their way, guided by the Holy Spirit, into God's heaven.

Now I was going to say something else to you. I was going to say that I have seen all these people, the five hundred, the seventy, the twelve, the three, the one, as they went up to join the innumerable multitude. Oh, I saw a man die once who was of the John type. Talk about a triumph, I never saw anything so triumphant in my life as that man's passing into the glory. And I have seen those who are illustrated by the three when they also departed. And talk about happiness, I never saw such happiness as filled the room from which those brave souls went to heaven. And I have seen the twelve when they left. One dear old saint who said, "It does not matter whether I am here tomorrow or not; because if I am here, He will be with me, and if I am not here, I will be with Him." And I have seen the seventy go from the frontier, from the battlefield, out of the hurricane, out of the service, falling down on the battlefield, with hand bloodily glued to the sword, so that the angels had to wrench the sword out of the grasp to put in it the conqueror's palm. And I have seen the five hundred go. They were not gifted, and they were not great. The world knew nothing about them. No paens were sung over

them, no eulogies delivered. They simply lived for the Lord, and when the time came they passed away to be with the Lord. But I tell you their exit from this world and their entrance into the other were as different as North from South, midnight from mid-day. They went into the glory.

Now I reach the real dilemma of my sermon. It does not seem to me to have an end. And I have the difficulty at this moment that I had when I studied it. I do not know where to taper it off and say, "This is the end of it." But I think I cannot do better than to hark back to the text, "Our gathering together unto Him." Let us gather together unto Him now, in hearty humble prayer, an incessant unwavering loyalty, as we say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Oh, may Jesus Christ win us unto Himself and cause us to be loyalists ever true to Him.

XII

THE CHURCH

“The Church, which is His body.”—Ephesians 1:22, 23.

WE ARE not left to my opinion or yours as to the meaning of the word “Church.” For here we have a definition of the word from God’s own lips. And, if I dare so phrase it, I cannot imagine even God giving a more wonderful revelation than this which He has given. For in the text the Apostle Paul says as we have heard, that the Church is the Body of Christ. Now the beauty of the Bible is that it appeals to every man—not to men in classes—but to every man. And the outstanding advantage of God’s definition of the Church is this, that every person in the world can at once understand it. John once defined the Church as the Bride of Christ. But there are millions of people who can get from John’s exposition very little, and millions who can get from it nothing at all. For not every man has a bride, but every man has a body. And so everyone can hear God saying, “The Church is the Body of Christ,” and with adequate understanding comprehend the definition.

Now hurriedly flinging out a few sentences must lead me up to the one thing I want to say to you. The body has a head. The Head of the Church which is Christ’s body is evidently Christ Himself. We preachers—and every Christian also—need to remember that the Head of that body is Jesus Christ. And we should remind ourselves how that in the body there are many members, which function

variedly. Diversity in co-operation! We should bear in mind, too, that every member ministers to every other member in the body. There never has been a bit of schism between these two fingers of mine since I had them. There never is a particle of jealousy between these two arms of mine. They minister finger to finger, arm to arm, without any selfishness ever appearing, for all the members are interested equally in each others' defense. Menace that little finger and every member of my body hurries to the safeguarding of it; and that finger responds in turn whenever the body outside the finger is menaced. So should it be in the church where all the members are on an equal basis in the Body, as are all the units in the body which is physical. This is a little finger, but it is as much in my body and part of my body and under the guidance and safeguarding of the head of this body as is my arm. And we need to bear that in mind also.

But this is given me especially to say to you, that the Body of Christ functions for Christ. Now let us begin at the very bottom and move up. This body functions for me; it is a part of me. I and it are distinct, yet one, I have a thought I want to express to my brother, yet I cannot express that thought unless this body begins to function through throat and tongue and lip and imparts that thought; and so throat and tongue and lip function for me, the person living in this body. I have it in my mind to pick up my grandchild who has fallen, but I cannot do it until this body begins to function through running foot and lifting hand; and so the body functions for me. Thus the body of Jesus functioned for Him, in the days of His flesh, exactly as your body functions for you. For He came, the great God-man with His infinite thoughts; but it was beyond Christ to get those thoughts into human heads and hearts until His body

functioned for Him, and His tongue spoke the undying music. He desired—it was His business, His supreme business—to disclose God to the world; but He could not do it until He became incarnate in a body that would function for Him, and enable Him to reveal to us the marvelous Father of our spirits, to whom we pray and in whom we trust.

But He has gone to glory. Then how does He function now? The last thing He did was to spread His hands in blessing over his disciples as He went up into heaven. So He has upon earth thus ceased to function! Now come back to God's definition. The Church is the Body of Christ. What is my body? That through which I function. What was Christ's body? That through which He functioned upon the earth. What is His body now? The Church, that through which He functions. Now you begin to realize that the Church is holy, as the Shekinah and the ark never were; that when a man speaks about the Church he should speak with bated breath, for he is talking about the Body of Christ, through which Christ functions visibly in the world. How many of you belong to the Church, put up your hand. Well, in what capacity are you functioning for Christ. All these are members of my body. You said by the uplifted hand you were members of His Body. But all these members of my body function for me. Wherein and how then do you function for Christ? As there comes to you the realization of that you are now saying, "I am a member of Christ's Body, and through me Christ functions," I say where and how do you function for Christ?

For let me in a parenthesis say that your church is strong inasmuch as it possesses members who function in the Body of Christ; and your church is weak in proportion to the sham members you have who do not function in the Body;

and so the quality and not the quantity of the members is the thing we should ever study. Not how many, but how much has been added to the Church?

The Body—bear it in mind—the Body functions. We are the Body of Christ, and we function—how? According to the will of the Head of the Body. The illustration you possess again. Why did my fingers pick up that book? Because it was the will of the head of my body that my fingers should so do, and these fingers have never done a single thing since I came into possession of them but what they did in response to the telegraphed desire of my head that they so function. Where does that bring us? It brings us to the command, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," because all the functioning of the body is done in obedience to the head of the body. And I say again, never has a member of this my body done the smallest particle of functioning but it has done that under the direct constraint of the head of the body. And whatever you do as a Christian man you must do as a member of the Body of Christ, and under the leadership and command of the Head of the Body, who is Christ.

Now how many members do we have in the church? How many of us ought to remain in the church? How many of us have ever been members of the Church which is His Body? I thank the Lord that by your faces I see my one prayer for this service has been answered, and you are serious and solemnly asking the question these fingers of mine might ask, Are we members of that body? Then are you members of the Body of Christ? Pluralizing questions like this has been our bane. Make it singular, I for myself, you for yourself. Am I a member of the Body of Christ, of which Body He is the Head? Then how am I functioning in that Body?

And the only other thing I had to say to you in this brief space of time is also serious and of great importance to us, perhaps never so important as at this particular time. How do I become a member of the Body of Christ? The most significant phrase I have ever found in the Bible at once puts itself alongside that question. It is that statement in Corinthians that we have read a hundred times and probably never understood: "Give no offense," says Paul to those Corinthian Christians, "give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles." Now all the world is in those two words "Jew and Gentile," for there was not a third man on earth before Paul wrote to the Corinthians. The classification when Paul wrote to the Romans was two-fold only; if you were not a Jew, you were a Gentile; and if you were not a Gentile, you were a Jew, and that was the end of it. But after he has said, "Give no offense to the Jew nor to the Gentile," instead of a full stop there is nothing but a comma, for he goes on to say, "no offense to the Jew"—one-half the world—"nor to the Gentile"—the other half of the world—"nor to the Church." Something has come into existence that was non-existent before. If you please, you may regard it as a new race; or, as Peter phrases it, an elect nation. Jew, Gentile—only two! Now add a third—the Church! But to ask how that strange addition to the population of the world came into existence is to suggest the question I have asked before in another way: How do I become a member of this Body of Christ? Evidently by no human method and no earthly channel, for there is a new order in existence.

Now recall your reading of the first chapter of John's gospel: "Who were born"—we are on familiar ground, we have all been born—"Who were born, not of blood"—that excludes us all—"nor of the will of the flesh"—then we

are excluded twice from anything other than that peculiar method of becoming members of the Body of Christ—"nor" —third time—"of the will of man." Well, if I am not to be born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, in heaven's name tell me how am I to be born; and in heaven's name we are told. "Not by blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Let every Roman Catholic priest in the world hear that. We are born of God, not of man.

And John's Master says that too. It was a windy night and the wind went howling around the streets of Jerusalem as a man climbed up the stairway into an upper room to talk with the strange Teacher. And I always think—you can please yourself about it—that he had a prepared speech, because he starts off in that very way, as he says, "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"—the commencement of a prepared speech!

But the Master cuts straight across it in a moment as He says, "Nicodemus, have you been born again?"

And Nicodemus answered, "A man cannot be born twice." Yes, East, West, North and South affirm Nicodemus to be right, for no man can be born twice.

And Jesus said, "Nicodemus, I am not talking about a birth that is of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man; but I am talking about being born anew, from above, of the Spirit." You can easily understand the increasing dilemma of Nicodemus as he blurts out his remark about the impossibility of a second natural birth, which Jesus admits. But there is a birth that is anew, from above, of the Spirit and independent of the flesh birth altogether.

What does He mean? Let John speak in his first epistle, where six times over he affirms that every single Christian

has been begotten by God. Oh, keep on saying, "Only believe," but for our soul's life let us also say, "Be begotten of God" as well.

What does that mean? Let Peter answer. "We are partakers of the Divine nature." Not a week goes over my life but I see in something connected with myself—the way I stand, the way I walk, the way I use my hands, the way I talk, the way I dig in the garden—I see something that reminds me that I am a partaker of my father's nature, concerning whom when he walked the street and I by his side the people behind us said they could not tell one of us from the other, we were so much alike in figure and in movement.

Now there breaks in on me a strange thing. I am a partaker of the Divine nature. Hear me! Be shocked if you like and be stunned, but hear me! The same quality of life that is in Christ is in the Christian; for he is a partaker of the Divine nature, which fact John had in his mind and heart and soul when he wrote, "He that is born of God cannot sin." There is the Divine nature by which a man becomes a member of the Body of Christ, and apart from which he can never become a member of that Body.

What is he then? Let Peter come back and again speak to us; he is a member of this elect nation. Of Israel, Greece, Rome? No, of the nation that is outside Jew and Gentile, of the nation that is the new race, of the elect race. And what are the characteristics of this elect race? Hear Peter as he further says, "a peculiar people," who are twice born, born-again men, Spirit-born men.

Are we evidencing the fact that we are members of Christ's Body by our speech and actions and way of transacting business and living our life? Are we thus creating astonishment in the city of Portland so that men say, What in the world is the meaning of this? Why do they do that?

What is the matter with them? What makes them so different from the rest of us? What is the change that has come over that man? Do they say, I used to know him when he swore on the fishing trip, and he does not do so now. What is the matter with the peculiar man?

But I must stop even there, for the apostle goes on to say another thing: "They are a royal priesthood." What? The members of the East Side Baptist Church? You have not a rich man among you, nor men of social status. Is it not laughable, every one of them a member of a royal priesthood? The statement is the statement of a madman, the world says; and it is correct from the world's viewpoint. But John comes and stands beside his brother Apostle Peter and says, "You are right, Peter, because God has made us kings and priests in Jesus Christ." Do you see where you are getting? Because of your relation to the great Head, by becoming a member of His Body, you are lifted up to His high level, and you become, by virtue of your relationship to Jesus, kings and priests unto God.

Thus the way to a consistent life that I believe every single church member here wants to live, the way to a dignified life which every child of God should assuredly live, the way to a poise that would be undisturbed if mountains began to fly through the air like thistledown in a hurricane, the way to be serene if the seas were licked up by the judgment flame, the way to all this and a thousand-fold more of blessedness and elevation lies along this line of recognizing your high calling in Christ Jesus! Do enemies say they will do you some injury? Why, my brother, you are a member of the Body of Christ. How can they hurt you? Is it any wonder that my old master, Mr. Spurgeon, said in his own beautiful human way, "They say? Well, let them say." That is the supreme utterance of a man conscious that

he is in Christ. So what matters it what our enemies say? We shall stand as stood the three Hebrews in the presence of the infuriated king when they made their high dignified reply, "We will not worship thus, for our God is able to deliver us out of thy hand; but whether he sees fit to deliver us or not, we will not bow down." Who were talking there? Three men who were in God! And as Beecher told you long years ago, the man standing alone but in the right has God with him, and God is multitudinous above the teeming multitudes of wrong.

And the way of serviceableness lies here. I am a member of the Body of Christ. It is the business of the members to function according to the dictates of the Head of that body. I must function for Christ. Hear George Herbert:

"A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
 Makes that and the action fine."

We need to realize this my friends, because we have no genius, no outstanding talent; we are just members of the Body of Christ. Yet if we function under the absorbing, glorious consciousness that we are members of His Body, life becomes beautiful, and service becomes a thing to be greatly desired.

Let me tell you the story of a cobbler of Edinburgh. One day the new minister was making his initial calls, and he called at the cobbler's shop. He talked loftily to the cobbler, as we preachers are wont to do when certain fits of stupidity possess us! And when the cobbler answered back, the preacher in astonishment said, "Man, you should not be cobbling shoes, you, a man with such thoughts and such a manner of expressing those thoughts! You should not be doing secular work."

And the cobbler said, "Sir, take that back!"

"What?"

"That I am doing secular work. Do you see that pair of shoes there?"

"I do."

"They belong to Widow Smith's son. Her husband died in the summer. She nearly died too, but she was kept alive by her boy. Now her boy has a paper route to help the widow keep the roof over their heads, and the bad weather is coming on; and God Almighty said to me, 'Will you cobble Widow Smith's boy's shoes so that he wont catch the pneumonia and die this winter?' And I said, 'I will!' Now do you preach your sermons under God Almighty's direction, as I trust you may; and I will cobble Widow Smith's boy's shoes under God Almighty's direction; and in the day the awards are given out He will say to you and to me the same sentence, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' "

That is a high way of cobbling shoes! Do we not feel as though we wish God would make us cobblers, every one of us, if we could cobble shoes like that? But you in your degree and I in mine as members of the Body must be functioning according to the dictates of the Head, Jesus Christ.

There is an illustration that never leaves me, and has not for a quarter of a century. I remember how I read it and put it away in my head and in my heart at the same time. A man in the old days of France tutored a prince of the blood royal, who was like all other boys and needed correction once in a while. But who could correct a prince of the blood royal? And that wise tutor one day said, "Allow me to pin this piece of ribbon on the lapel of your coat. As you see, it is the royal purple of old France." And he pinned it there, and then said, "Sir, whenever you are guilty of speaking or acting in a way unbecoming to a prince of

the blood, I shall point to the ribbon on the lapel of your coat and make my appeal to the purple and expect you to respond to the appeal!" If you do not know why I told you that story I will tell you. You are kings and priests unto God. You are members of the Body of Christ—of His Church. The royal purple is on your brow and in your heart; and the Spirit of God makes His appeal to the purple and expects you to go back to your church, wherever it is; to your work, whatever it is; to your life, wherever it may lead; and the Spirit of God appeals to the purple and bids you go back there to be a member of an elect nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood. O my friends, I have said these burning words to you tonight that you, delegates from the churches, may go home to those churches and so live that your fellow church members, next Sunday at the very latest, will say to each other pertinently, "What has come over him? What has happened to her?" Then they will begin to find out through your life, through your lip, through the way you move and act, that you are of the people who are neither Jew nor Gentile, but belong to the Church which is the Body of Jesus Christ.

(Note.—Preached at the Baptist Convention of Oregon.)

XIII

GOD THE CONSUMING FIRE

"God is a consuming fire."—Hebrews 12:29.

THE great curse of this year of our Lord is the lost sense of God. Most of us are atheists in practice all the time, and God is not in all our thoughts; many of us are atheists in practice most of the time; and all of us are atheists in practice some of the time. And there lie great stretches of time in your life and mine when consciousness of God is as foreign to us as roses to the Sahara Desert. There are great areas of our experience that are absolutely godless, so far as our recognition of the Lord is concerned.

The practice of the presence of God would revolutionize the life we are living. It would alter the very way in which we stand, would the consciousness that we were standing in the presence of God. It would affect our conversation, and a carefulness would characterize our speech that is now absent, if we knew that God is the unseen listener to every word. And the things we do that we should leave undone, and the undone things that would be performed if we came into the realization of the Lord's continuous presence, are simply legion. Disconcerting to most of us often would be Browning's great question, "What will God say?" Disconcerting, I say, would that suggestion be to most of us, nearly all the time. And we would differently spend our money, and we would differently use our time, and all our estimates of values would undergo a change, if we definitely

came into the realization that we are ever in the great Task-master's eye.

I thought last week that if some messenger from Mars came to our planet, and we gave him this information: "We all believe that God made us; that God is our Saviour; that God will be our Judge; that we are marching hour by hour towards His judgment seat; that we are bound for heaven or for hell; that we must live eternally"—I thought how that stranger, having listened to our information, would say, "Well, you must be a wonderful people; what marvelous lives you must live; and how you must seek to abide under the good pleasure of this wonderful God, even as when in the storm you seek the cover of your roof!"

But how his amazement would grow as he came into the comprehension of the poor way and the Godless way in which we do live. I need no additional proof of the truthfulness of what I assert than your strained attention at this moment. You know I am voicing your experience; I am uttering your thought; I am expressing your consciousness. If there is a prayer that comes to my tongue at this solemn moment it is the prayer of Isaiah, "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, and come down," to disturb us out of our stolidity, and consume the dross that has accumulated with the gold, and illumine us as to the right kind of life to live, and to consume among us the things that ought no longer to possess existence. Oh, I thought as I looked at the hillsides putting on colors such as artist never dreamed and only God could produce, I thought how good it would be for us if every single flaming vine maple became as the burning bush that Moses saw in the Midian desert, when looking at it intently he drew near it in wonder, and heard the voice of God speaking out of the flame to him. I am not arguing for a return of Pantheism—that God is in everything and every-

thing is God—but I am arguing for the realization that God is the great Personality whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere; that “in Him we live and move and have our being”; and that no man can, on sea or land, get beyond the God-filled horizon.

How that consciousness would change the life of each one of us; for if we realized that the flaming chariots and horses of God surround us, as they surrounded Elisha in the olden time when the Lord opened the eyes of the prophet’s servant to see what were the real defences of Israel, we should walk grandly, and talk like kings, and become true independents who realize that no shaft can hit till the God of covenanting grace sees fit; and we should not be talking then about being “pretty well, under the circumstances,” but we should talk about being all right, because we are above the circumstances. We should come into the consciousness that our God is the God of fire that the old-time Tishbite possessed, when he stood in the presence of a wicked king and a back-slidden nation and idolatrous priests and dared make his appeal that was at the same time his challenge: “The God who answereth by fire, let Him be the God.” Oh, I tell you, the crying need of the times is the consuming fire of God.

That is what we need in the pulpit. God has no controversy with our culture, our studies, or our preparation; but God has contempt for all that sort of thing when it lacks the holy flame and passion and devotion of the brain and heart and soul. I had rather listen to the crudest speech from the heart of a sinner in a mission hall, than hear the most cultured production of the wisest speaker whose lips had never been touched with the live coals from off the altar of Jehovah. And what we need in the pew is men who have had contact with the God of fire, like unto the audience that Jehovah mentioned to Isaiah when He said, “I will make

your words as fire, and the people shall be as wood to be devoured by them." Oh, for a man touched by the fire to preach to an audience affected by the fire! Would God we might have one service like that before we pass hence!

And I wish with all my heart that a sentence over here in Lamentations might be in your mind and mine at this moment: "The Lord will kindle a fire in Zion." That is what we need—a fire in the heart of the preacher, a fire in the heart of every church officer, a fire in the heart of every church member. "The Lord will kindle a fire in Zion." I look off at some of you and I know you would run faster than you ever ran before if you knew that Fire was to be kindled in this church within five minutes! And so you judge yourselves in the presence of God.

Along with that lost sense of God there has necessarily come to us a loss of sin-consciousness. Do you know, I find myself nearly every day of my life wondering at the presence of Eddyism among us. That a thing calling itself Christian—and ice has as much claim to call itself flame and flame to call itself ice, as has that idiotic philosophy to call itself Christian—that such a thing should grow up and thrive and spread that has at its heart the denial of sin—why it is astonishing, and is, I believe in my soul, an indication of a widespread lost consciousness of sin, else it could not thrive as it does.

And that lost consciousness of sin is largely to blame for this tidal wave of crime that is rolling over the whole world. We have lost our consciousness of sin. I am talking to people who sympathized with an escaped convict and hoped he would elude the law. A lost consciousness of sin lies back of that. And I am talking to people who, thank God, were disgusted by the sentimentality in San Francisco over a crime that ought to put the perpetrator of it out of the

world or out of society for the rest of his life. But fools sent bouquets of flowers to him and fools maudlingly flung their arms around the neck of a beast like that and kissed it. Such conduct is shamed by the Congo, and it is shamed by the Ganges!

But what does it mean? What do all these things mean? They mean the lost sense of sin. Oh, every once in a while I go and read one sentence God has written down in that Bible, where He speaks of sin in this way: "That abominable thing which I hate." Men and women, we need to look at that sentence right often in these days. We may condone, but He condemns. We may lose the sense of the sin, but the sin remains in the sight of God. And very often I think of the Lord Christ's great word when He was going to His death. He looked out with eyes that saw behind the curtain, and He saw not so much a clamoring mob as behind that clamoring mob the great incarnate spirit of evil; and then He uttered what perhaps is His most tragic utterance, "This is your hour, and the hour of the power of darkness." And when that power of darkness had its one hour of unbridled liberty it slew the very Son of God and darkened heaven. That is sin! And God's counsel to you and to me, if we belong to Him, is this: "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." Hate evil! Do you know why they have no use for my Saviour's cross? They have lost consciousness of the sin which alone requires it. A doctor may be ornamental to me while I am well; but when death's chill fingers touch my heart, the doctor is serviceable. And Christ has for us no purpose of usefulness as He hangs upon that cross until we say—as the singer a minute ago—"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O God." The lost sense of sin!

And have you observed how the old contrition has gone

out of our prayers? An officer of the church remarked to me some time ago, alluding to a prayer that had been offered to the congregation rather than to God, "That man assuredly gave the Almighty some very useful information." The old note of contrition has died out; the going down on the face before God and acknowledging that we are vile, we have lost that. I can tell you of a minister who said, "We no longer sing, 'There is a fountain filled with blood,' for it does not appeal to the æsthetic tastes of my congregation."

Also the old note of contrition in our testimony has failed. If a man stood up in our meeting tonight, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, and with choked utterances confessed his deep, high, broad, black, hell-deserving sin before God, we should wonder what great crime he had committed, or was he insane, or what was the matter with him. And that old self-loathing that made Peter say, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"—who of us knows anything about that in our experience?

And because we have lost that consciousness of sin ourselves we hear no note of contrition in the congregation today. I tell you the man is never going to stand up and say, "What must I do to be saved?" until he gets some message from a man who has already been saved, and is surrounded by an atmosphere engendered by people who know what it is to be saved. The ordinary church today—I tell you to your face—is nothing but an ecclesiastical club! And Jesus Christ would have slim chances for election therein, too! We have lost the sense of sin. We need to have the great Baptizer come, whose fan is in His hand, and of whom it is said, He will thoroughly cleanse His floor and burn up the chaff. We need to go into the upper room where the flaming fire of God moves and equips the apostles

for the evangelization of the world. And I remember another text, too, that comes to me from the lips of Jesus. Do you remember how one day He said, "I am come to send fire on the earth." I wish the prayer might go up from this entire audience that that fire might strike here now, and proceed to do its work, and have its own way on our lives.

And then, lastly, we have lost the old fervid, flaming passion. We have grown cold, and it is not the coldness of ice, but it is the coldness of death. I read a tract sometime ago that asked this startling question: "If you were to receive a ten-dollar gold piece for every time you spoke to a man about Jesus Christ, would you speak to men any more often than you do now?" Why, it was like a blow, the shock of this sentence. The old conviction, the old apprehended truth, the old grip of faith, the old fire that burned in the heart until it had to find expression through the lips—what do we know about it, except as we read religious books, books of biography of the great men gone. If you knew that your boy faced some fell disease would your treatment concerning that boy be as calm and indifferent as is your treatment of that boy when, as you must believe, he is in danger of an everlasting hell? What is the matter? The old fervor is gone, and the old flame has died!

Oh, I thought last week, if I knew where I could hear an old-time sermon I certainly would hear it, from a man who believed in a real God, not in some principle; or who believed in a real Christ, not in some legendary name; or who believed in a Holy Spirit, not in an influence; and who believed in heaven, and a hell, and an eternity. Can you tell me where to go to hear such a sermon? The man who with a hundred eccentricities—some of which had far better be abandoned—preaches that sort of sermon in

the public eye today is the man they will not allow to hold a meeting in the city of Portland. For if he comes he will split their Federation asunder. Oh, what a Federation! Lost the old fire!

Ah, there was a time when church members could go to the men of the world and say their little sentence of questioning and warning, and there was such a hot heart behind it that those questions went straight into the hearts of the people to whom they were addressed. But now,—well, I leave it with you,—how many people have you spoken to like that since this year commenced?

And where they instruct us as to the way we should preach —do you know what they say? You should be calm! But here in the first book of the Bible Abraham realizes that Sodom is to be destroyed. And he says, "Lord, if there are fifty good people in Sodom will you spare it? If there are forty-five? If there are forty? If there are thirty? If there are twenty? If there are ten! But Abraham should have been calm!

Here is the second book of the Bible. "And God said to Moses, stand on one side. I will make of thee a great people, but I will wipe out this rebel nation." And Moses said, "Forgive them; but if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written and let me die with Israel." But Moses should have been calm!

Then you go through here to a book you know nothing about, and Jeremiah says, "Oh that my head were water, that I might weep day and night for the iniquity of the people." But Jeremiah should have been calm!

Here is our Apostle to the Gentiles, and he says, "Hath God cast away His people Israel? God forbid. Oh, I could wish myself accursed for Israel's sake." But Paul should have been calm!

Here is the gospel telling how the Son of man sat upon the mountain overlooking Jerusalem, and as He looked, He wept and said, "O Jerusalem, if thou hadst known." And the big tears rolled down His cheeks. But Jesus should have been calm!

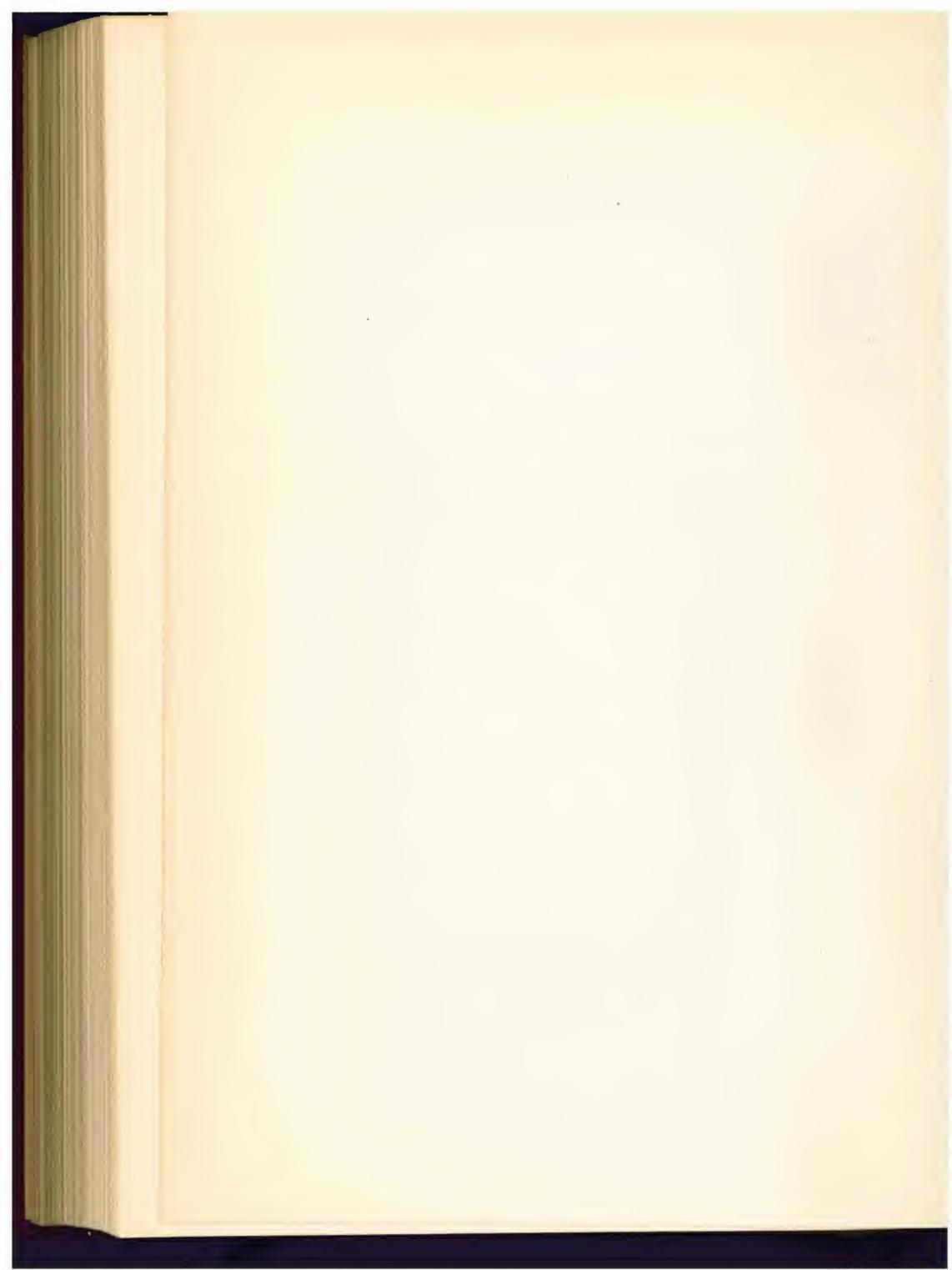
And Henry Martin the missionary said as he plunged into the wilds, "See me burn up for God." When John R. Mott was in China on one occasion a converted Chinaman who was preaching with all his might the simple gospel he had discovered said, "Sir, are all the people in America people of burning hearts?"

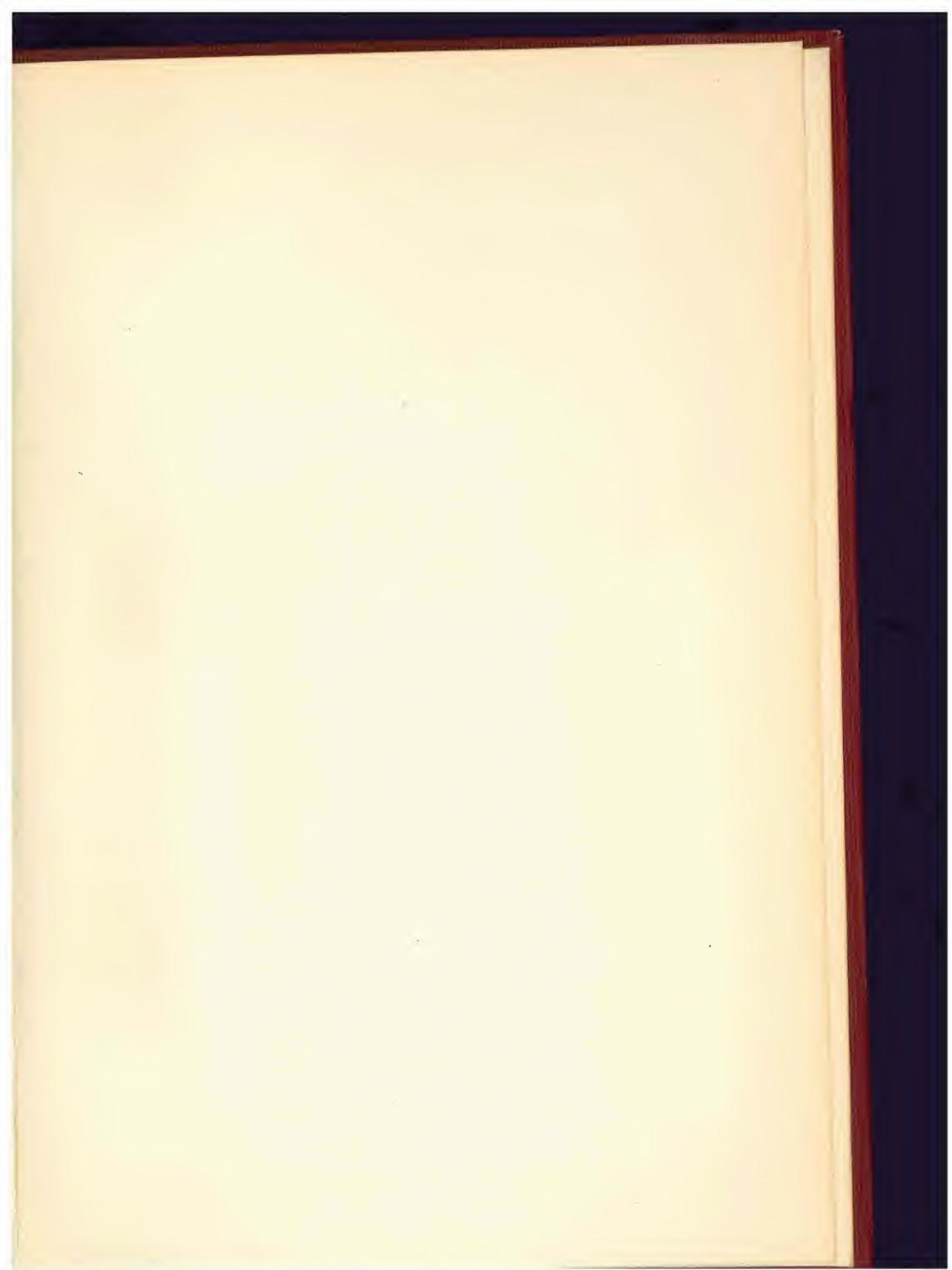
Yes, we need the consuming fire. Then you mothers will talk to your daughters as you have never talked yet—God help them to forgive you. And you fathers will talk to your sons with the quiet forceful utterances that tell of volcanoes of emotion behind them. And you teachers will teach your classes, and those classes shall see the flame that hovered upon the brows of the disciples at Pentecost.

Our God is a consuming fire. So let us go to God. Let us go to God on the cross, for if I do not go to Him there, I shall never go to Him in heaven. And God on the cross shows me how God feels about man and his sin. God's understanding of sin is that it is so colossal, only the death of His own Son can atone. But when you see Jesus on that cross atoning for sin—oh, you will go out with a consciousness of the sin of your own heart and the sin of the world and of the race that will burn in your brain! And along with the God-consciousness and the sin-consciousness there will come to you a fire that will make your words revelations, battles, earthquakes, storms, and flaming lightning; and your lives shall be firm as mountains, and resistless as stars rushing along their orbits, and terrible in the sight of the evil.

Now, then, do you want the God of the consuming fire? Oh, I read my text in the bygone years with a gasp in my throat. God, we do not want that! But I have lived long enough to see in my life and in yours, in the church's life and in the world's life, that which causes me to say, Lord come not as the gentle zephyr, but as the cyclone of power! Come not as the dawn comes when all the birds begin to sing and the flowers open their petals, but come as the consuming fire to burn up the dross and the chaff, and let the gold and wheat come into evidence. Oh, for a revival that would put out of all of us the wrong that is in all of us, even if that revival should put out from among us bodily some who are among us now—God speed it. For if we had a preacher of that kind, and fifty men and women of that kind in this church, the whole state would know that here the God of fire presided and had His undisputable sway.

I told you people on Wednesday night we are heading up into a great revival of religion in this church. We are. And I think it is a revival that will put some of you out. I hope it will, unless you change. I think it is a revival that will burn you. And some of you will have to lose your health, money, pride, arrogance, swagger, conceit, meanness, niggardliness, selfishness and your cowardice. But, oh, let us pray that He may move in our midst before we separate, as the consuming fire; and keep on moving until at last He has a place here where He can utter His deep revelations, work His great miracles, and—I hardly dare say it, and yet it comes to me suddenly and seems as though it ought to be said—where even the God who is a consuming fire can be at home.





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